


MELODIES AND
MEMORIES.

JOHN BLACK

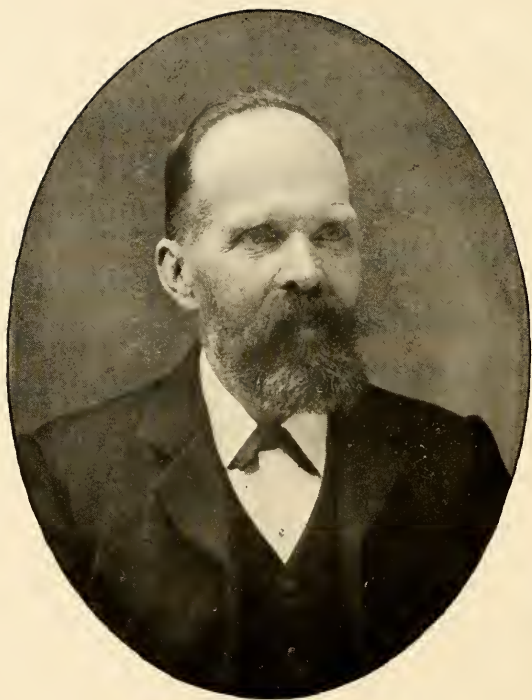


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MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

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MELODIES AND MEMORIES

WITH A HISTORY
OF THE
BLACKS OF BREICH WATER DISTRICT.

BY JOHN BLACK



GLASGOW
A. M'LAREN & SON, ARGYLE STREET

1909



BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

JOHN BLACK, author of many poems and prose sketches, came upon the stage of life just as the year of grace 1849 was drawing to a close. He is the eighth of a family of four sons and eight daughters, who were brought up at the farm of East Handaxwood, in West Calder Parish, and near Fauldhouse, Linlithgowshire, the district which, as *Bentybrae*, he has sung and depicted with tenderness and fidelity.

Mr Black comes of a rhyming family, one of his brothers and two of his sisters being capable of expressing their thoughts in verse. Early last century his maternal great-grandfather, James Smith, published a volume of verses, and was well known in Lanarkshire as "the quaint Wishaw poet." It is, however, to Robert Tennant, the postman poet, that Mr Black attributes the influence which moved him in the direction of the muse, and, being fond of reading, many of our standard poets won his esteem, and doubtless influenced his thoughts.

When about twenty-three years of age, Mr Black commenced to contribute to the poet's corner of various newspapers and magazines. A large number of his pieces have appeared in *The Hamilton Advertiser*. In enumerating books which have especially helped him, our friend humorously includes the Pronouncing Dictionary, which he carried in his pocket.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

After residing twelve years at Addiewell, Mr Black, with his wife and family, moved westward, exchanging a home on the banks of the Breich for one on the banks of the Kelvin.

While taking a more or less active interest in his immediate and busy surroundings, his thoughts often fly to the rural solitudes where, in former years, he admired and communed with nature in her varied phases of light and shade. Many of his themes were suggested by common every-day sights throughout the changing seasons, and sometimes by outstanding experiences of thought and feeling.

One of the traits of our poet which strikes us very much is the constancy with which he sings. Others may take to the muse by fits and starts, but, like the brook, he goes on for ever, and he seems to be as heedless as the brook as to what the critics may say. His effusions are warmly appreciated by many lovers of homely, natural verse. Amongst the pieces which have taken hold of our memory as showing Mr Black's muse at its best, we may mention, "The Temple of Silence," "The Hame-Gaun 'Oor," "United Hearts," and "A Hame o' yer Ain," while his sketches of "The Old Dominie" and "Bob Magee" strike us as having a quiet power and a freedom from exaggeration, that make them a unique contribution to Scotland's "Kailyard" literature. All Mr Black's writings are pervaded by that true Christian philosophy which never fails to gladden the hearts and purify the lives of all who come under its spell.

Stalwart in physique, and upright in character, with a warm underglow of genial sentiment, Mr Black is indeed a typical Scot, and worthy the esteem in which he is held by a wide circle of acquaintances and friends.—From "Lanarkshire Poets" in *Wishaw Herald*.



Dedication.

*To friends old and new,
To friends near and far,
I cordially dedicate this volume.*

THE AUTHOR.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

LOVE AND HOME.

MUIRLAN' MELODIES.

Awa' in a lang, lane muirlan' glen,
A wee broon burnie wimples,
An' melody rare floats oot on the air,
While the burnie foams and dimples.

O'erheid on a lang clear seedtime day,
By the glenside lown an' shinin',
The peesweep an' whaup, the plover an' snipe,
Their love-tones a' are twinin'.

While the laverock sweeter than a' the rest
Has abune them high ascended ;
An' ilk varied note frae ilka throat
In harmony grand is blended.

Frae the hearts o' the birds an' the burnie
The melodies free are flowin',
An' into my heart till wi' gladsome start
My een wi' delight are glowin'.

Sae be't wi' the sangs o' a lowly bard
Wha loe's to be saftly croonin'
A heart-born sang that the warl's thrang
Is afftimes nearly droonin'.

There's a deep weird charm in the mingled notes
O' the birds bred 'mang the heather ;
An' a heart that's kind their tones will mind
Tho' the birds ha'e nae gay feather.

A HAME O' YOUR AIN.

GUDE luck to ye, friend ; and may you an' your wife
Lang be spared to enjoy a sweet married life—
A bright lowin' fire an' a cosy hearthstane,
'Neath the beild an' the shield o' a hame o' your ain.

What a change frae a chair in anither man's house,
Whare ye darena use freedom, nor craw very croose,
Lest ye need to tak' tramp, in the snaw or the rain,
Lamentin' the want o' a hame o' your ain.

What a comfort that tho' amang strangers ye bide,
There is ane ye lo'e weel never far frae your side,
Whae your hame-comin' aye will welcome fu' fain,
An' brichten, an' lichten, a hame o' your ain.

You are king o' the castle, an' she is the queen ;
May your reign be as happy as ever was seen ;
An' e'en when you think on gude days that are gane,
Be merry an' blythe in a hame o' your ain !

Then clear weel your throats, an' sing noo wi' glee,
There's nae place on earth like *my* hame to me :
An' folk ne'er were meant to gang through life alane,
But to join hands an' hearts in a hame o' their ain.

THE LASSIE I LO'E BEST.

YE say she's comin' back to me,
The gude news I had guess'd,
She'll sunshine bring, an' mak me sing,
When she comes smiling west.
Right glad I'll be her face to see,
The lassie I lo'e best.

Her winsome smile an' kindly voice,
 Her willin' helpin' han'
 Can mak my thankfu' heart rejoice,
 While day by day I'm gaun
 Awa' frae hame 'mang weary noise,
 Wi' things agley an' thrawn.

There's mony things I weel can want
 Thro' every passing year,
 Tho' fame an' grandeur be but scant,
 An' riches past me steer,
 O' happiness I'll fondly vaunt
 Sae lang's my lassie's near.

THE SMILE O' THE LASS WE LO'E.

LIKE glints o' a gowden sunshine
 When the lift's o' a leaden hue,
 Like clear munelicht tae a mirky nicht
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like sangs frae the soarin' laverock
 When in spring he sings anew,
 Like flooers that grow on a grassy knowe
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like saft, refreshin' simmer shooer
 That fa's on the yird like dew,
 Like rosy dawn when hay's new mawn
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like a calm an' cludless gloamin'
 When the stars are peepin' through,
 An' their lustre bricht mak's the heart feel licht,
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like when we are sweetly sleepin'
 Fair visions meet oor view,
 An' we think we hear sweet words o' cheer,
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like hame to the weary wanderer
 Wha has joys an' comforts few,
 Like harmless mirth roond a glowin' hearth
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like kindly word frae weel lo'ed freend,
 An' ane that we ken is true,
 Like a helpin' han' when we micht ha'e fa'n,
 Is the smile o' the lass we lo'e.

Like the purest an' best o' earthly bliss,
 When oor cups are brimmin' fu',
 Is a cheery smile that haps nae guile
 In the heart o' the lass we lo'e.

THE BAIRNIES O' BENTYBRAE.

SING me a sang that is soothin' an' sweet,
 A lilt that will lichten my musin's grey,
 Let me hear frae afar the patter o' feet,
 The feet o' the bairnies o' Bentybrae.

There were nearly a dizzen frae first to last,
 'Tween Nannie an' Jim, wha in childhood's day
 A' toddled in turn on the fitpaths, past
 The beeches an' bourtrees o' Bentybrae.

Inside the big kitchen, wi' chimley wide,
 On days that were wat they would blithely play,
 Or oot in the barn would paukily hide
 An' seek ; the braw bairnies o' Bentybrae.

Doon in the meadows, when simmer smiled,
In the Water o' Drumley they waded gay,
Then gather'd them garlands o' blossoms wild,
Syne hied them hameward to Bentybrae.

Around the ricks in the auld stackyaird,
On the harvest nichts, 'neath Luna's ray,
They gleefully gambolled, ye nicht hae heard
Their voices—a mile frae Bentybrae.

Again an' again would the laddies speel
The auld ash trees at gloamin' grey ;
Or scamper yont by the auld mill wheel—
The steerin' bairnies o' Bentybrae.

They were cheery an' thrang ilk wauken 'oor,
Wi' rinnin' errands, wi' wark or play,
Day after day through sun and sho'er,
The blue-e'ed bairnies o' Bentybrae.

There's but little left o' the auld hame noo,
To see its dooncome my heart is wae,
Yet memory mak's my wrinkled broo
Grow smoother wi' thinkin' o' Bentybrae.

BENTYBRAE.

SOME ha'e been speirin' here an' there
“Whaur is that place sae lown and fair
At which the blue-e'ed bairnies played
Beneath the beeches and bourtrees' shade ?”
Nae reason hae I to say them nay
An' noo I'll tell ye o' Bentybrae.

Dae ye ken yon glenside, green an' steep,
Near muirlan's wide, whaur wise auld sheep
Stamp their feet when a stranger comes,
An' snort, through nostrils wide, like drums,
To scare the wanderin' wights away?
That's whaur ye'll find my Bentybrae.

The trees, ye may coont them a' in an 'oor,
If ye taigle nane ower bush an' flo'er ;
There are birds, a free an' varied thrang,
An' some at least, hae a dulcet sang,
Wi' plumage green, or dun, or grey—
Just like the scenes roond Bentybrae.

To some it may hae nae charmin' look—
But to them wha hae kent each knowe an' nook
The ripplin' rills, the glen an' the glade,
For fifty years through sun an' shade,
A kindly glamour lingers aye
Roond the fields an' beilds o' Bentybrae.

Though whiles o'ershadowed by misty cloud
An' scourged by tempests lang an' loud,
It has been to some as an Eden fair,
An' still is a place beyond compare ;
E'en though like exiles afar they stay
In dreams they revisit Bentybrae.

The dear auld freends o' early years,
Wha faithfu' were in joy an' tears,
Noo gane for aye frae this low ground,
Haloes o' love their names surround ;
Nae marvel that noo, when growin' grey,
Their kindred lo'e auld Bentybrae.

DEAR WEE BAIRNIE.

DEAR wee bairnie, sweetly sleeping
In thy cosy, cradle bed ;
Angels spirits aye are keeping
Watch around thy little head.

Dear wee bairnie, mother's fingers
Prompted by her loving breast,
Oft attend thee, and she lingers
Oft beside thy couch of rest.

Dear wee bairnie, mother loves thee
With a true and tender heart,
And she gently bends above thee,
Moved by every moan and start.

Dear wee bairnie, showers of kisses
From thy little brother's lips
Fall on thee—no place he misses—
Face, nor feet, nor finger tips.

Dear wee bairnie, softly slumber,
Free from toil and tempests wild ;
Free from all the cares that cumber—
Happy as a harmless child.

CHILDHOOD'S CHARMS.

CHILDHOOD's charms are pure and lovely,
Sweet as early summer morning ;
When the dew-drops shine in beauty,
Flowers and grasses all adorning.

Parents who are kind and loving
Proudly prize their little treasures,
And the happy infant's prattling
Yields them pure and precious pleasures.

While the mother's household duties
Claim her care as day is fleeting,
Many a quaint and pleasant chatter
From child lips her ears are greeting.

When the father comes at evening,
From his day of toil returning ;
Words of welcome, faces smiling,
Shew him love is brightly burning.

Well he loves his boys and girls,
Patiently the coin he's earning,
To provide them food and clothing,
And to give them needful learning.

Who can tell those parents' sorrow
When they see a loved one fading ;
Brightness, health, and joy departing,
Sickness, pain, and death o'ershading.

Ah ! the hearts that bleed in secret,
Pain, bereavement, sorrow, feeling,
God alone doth know their number,
And He knows their need of healing.

SONG OF THE TEAPOT.

I SING of the loveliest place on earth,
And the happiest hour of the day :
The warm, cosy hearth of a well-kept home,
And the tea-time so pleasant and gay.

The bright, loving smiles of husband and wife,
With children's and friends' sweetly blend,
When the cares and the toils of the day are forgot,
And my aid I most gushingly lend.

'Mid fond, sprightly converse, and laughter and mirth,
You can joyously linger a while ;
The song of the tea-pot beside the bright hearth
Has a charm that can sorrow beguile.

Then still may all wives and all husbands delight
To share in enjoyment that hour,
Which soothes and refreshes the sorrow-worn soul,
And gives to the weary new power.

Far better the love and the comforts of home,
Where a salve for our sores can be found,
Than glittering grandeur of scenes far away
'Mid the whirl of life's "busy round."

The simpler your pleasures, the safer they are ;
If humble, your lot may the happier be ;
The plainer your fare, then the sounder your health—
But hold ! that's enough, here's your tea.

THE BIRRIN' WHEEL.

(A hamely picture o' aulden times.)

BRING forrit, my lassie, a baikie o' coals :
Tak' tent that ye wale them fu' weel,
A gude wheen o' peats an' a hantle o' chows,
While I'm birrin' awa' at my wheel.

Syne steek the door close an' come your wa's ben :
I'll sune hae some pirns ye can reel,
And thegither we'll lilt then a lichtsome sang,
While I'm birrin' awa' at my wheel.

Oor ingle is cosy : oor thack is a' hale :
 We've rowth o' gude tatties an' meal,
 A' we hae's oor ain, we're behauden to nane,
 While I'm birrin' awa' at my wheel.

Fu' blithely my lassock the steep braes o' life
 On ilka new day we will speel,
 Thole quately oor cark an' cantily sing,
 While I'm birrin' awa' at my wheel.

There's aye a wey through for the eident o' han'
 And hearts that are trusty an' leal :
 No' often atweel dae I think the 'oors lang
 While I'm birrin' awa' at my wheel.

It may be my lassie in years afterhen',
 When I'm dune wi' my rock an' my reel,
 Ye will couthily crack o' happy auld days,
 An' the birrin' awa' o' my wheel.

BONNIE SCOTLAND.

*(Written on the return of friends from San Francisco,
 July, 1892).*

WELCOME hame to Bonnie Scotland !
 From the "new world's" western shore,
 Safely over land and ocean,
 Thankful that your journey's o'er.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland,
 Where fair scenes and loving friends
 Greet you with a gladsome smiling,
 In which joy and blessing blends.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland,
Where your "kith and kin" abide,
Whose hearts to you with love were throbbing
When across the ocean wide.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland,
Where the dust of dear ones rest,
Whose dear memories will nerve us,
Still to love and live our best.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland—
Her green vales and flowery braes,
Where the glorious sun is shining
On the long bright summer days.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland—
Her grey knowes and heathery hills,
Land that you have dearly cherished—
Land whose name your being thrills.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland,
Land of poet's deathless song—
Of romance and fadeless story—
Land of love than death more strong.

Welcome hame to Bonnie Scotland—
Land where freedom's cause was fought,
Land of patriots and martyrs—
Where with blood our rights were bought.

TO A FRIEND ON HIS MARRIAGE.

My far-distant freend, I hae heard something new,
An' fondly I hope the guid tidings are true,
That you and your wifie are noo unco fain
In a couthie Canadian hame o' your ain.

May love, joy, an' peace fill your cup reamin' fu',
May faith, hope, an' courage aye carry ye through
In bright days o' youth when the outlook is fair,
Or in days that may come o'ershadowed by care.

Be leal to each other—staunch, loving an' leal,
An' let na' this world your happiness steal,
Hae a blithe thankfu' heart, a kind smilin' face,
An' try aye to act wi' some smeddum an' grace.

Go on heart an' han', an' may God bless ye baith,
In daein' what's richt see ye never be laith.
Yoursel's an' the needfu', help a' that ye can—
That's my counsel, alike to guidwife an' guidman.

UNITED HEARTS.

Two hearts that throb in harmony,
Two minds that think as one ;
Two pairs of hands that mutually
Will work till time is done.

Oh ! happy hearts, blest is your lot !
Such unison of feeling
Makes more than palace lowly cot,
Or lonely hillside shieling.

You taste the sweetest joys of life,
Your cups are brimm'd with gladness ;
Enjoying calm—enduring strife—
Nor joyless is your sadness.

The concord of your minds is more
Than any gilded pleasure—
Than sparkling wines, or golden ore,
Than all earth's sordid treasure.

Hope on ! work on ! devoted hearts,
Nor fear the world's frowning,
Still calmly, bravely act your parts
All baser deeds disowning.

Make life as pleasant as you may
The one heart for the other,
Enjoy the blessings of to-day
Nor tremble for another.

Have eager eyes and ears to see
Or hear, each other's charms,
Still may your love bloom fair and free
Unmoved by earth's alarms.

With fervent, child-like trust and love
Upraise your hearts to heaven,
Remembering it is from above
Your sweetest bliss is given.

BABY'S WELCOME.

WELCOME, little darling !
Helpless tho' thou be ;
We will tend thee gently,
We will cherish thee.
Mother's hands will help thee,
Mother's voice will soothe ;
All of us will love thee,
And thy pathway smooth.

Welcome, little darling !
Thou art free from guile—
Pure as dawn's bright dewdrops,
Sweet as sunbeam's smile.
Baby to our bosoms
Be like morning dew,
Give thy fragrant sweetness
Our spirits to renew.

Welcome, little darling !
'Tis spring time in the year ;
Bring with thee a brightness,
Which our lives will cheer.
Be within our dwelling,
A star of hope and love,
A light to lead us onward,
A light to point above.

CHILDHOOD.

Who would not fondly cherish the belief,
Amid his manhood's toil, and pain, and grief,
That heavenly influence hovers o'er
The children prattling gaily on the floor ?
Who is not cheer'd and sooth'd throughout life's race
By seeing childhood's pure and guileless grace ?

And who remembers not, with sweet delight,
The early years of childhood, calm and bright?
Who does not love to hold life's mirror back to youth,
And ponder oft on days of guileless joy and truth?
And who, oh! who can fail to clearly see
That "Heaven lies about us in our infancy?"

And tho' the toils, and cares, and pains of age,
Oft-times our thoughts and feelings much engage,
We feel renew'd in heart, and young once more,
When merry, happy children gambol o'er
The sunny, summer sward, or by the hearth,
Repressing grief and rousing blessed mirth.

Yes! Heaven is kind to us in every way,
Altho' we often wander far astray;
But chiefly in the blessings to us sent
Thro' the dear children who to us are lent,
That by their gentle, artless aid, we may
Rise nearer heaven before life's final day.

Heaven help us all to ope our hearts to love
From human breasts and from the source above;
Help us to train, and to rejoice with youth,
And give us golden gleams of God-like truth,
Such as to childhood's sinless souls are given,
While still so near to happiness and heaven.

A BAIRNIE'S FITMARK.

A WEE bairnie's fitmark! I'd tell ye what it says,
It speaks to me o' harmless and happy gouden days,
Brings thochts o' guileless pleasure, o' toddlin' oot an' in,
Wadin' burns an' clim'in' braes, till langest days are dune.

To me it whispers sweetly o' pure, licht-hearted joys,
 Gatherin' flo'ers, an' lookin' nests, an' mony ither ploys ;
 It whispers lown o' mother's love—tender, thochtfu', leal,
 Ne'er again in a' oor lives can we sae lightsome feel.

A bairnie's fitmark tells me o' mony a gait to gang,
 Sae I pray that bairnies a' be keepit aye frae wrang,
 An' that He wha lo'es them weel may bless them a' their days
 By gi'en grace an' strength to speel aricht life's rugged braes.

A wee bairnie's fitmark aye brings bygane years to me,
 Unfoldin' mony a vista o' beauty to my e'e ;
 It lifts the curtain o' the past, reveals a glory land
 That seems to be an emblem o' comin' life mair grand.

VERSES

SUGGESTED BY THE THOUGHTFUL TALK OF A CHILD.

OH ! for the faith of a little child,
 And its simple, steadfast trust ;
 Oh ! for a spirit undefiled,
 By care's corroding crust.

Oh ! for the peace and purity
 That dwell in its youthful breast ;
 Oh ! for the blest security
 It feels 'mid the world's unrest.

Alas ! in memories only
 Come perfect child-like gleams ;
 Yet they cheer our hearts when lonely,
 And sometimes gild our dreams.

As I list to the guileless prattle
And thoughtful talk of a child,
I think, with fear of the battle,
And the tempests fierce and wild,

Which the young hearts soon must enter,
And be tried with many a test :
Oh ! God, be Thou the centre,
Where their souls shall safely rest.

CHILD MEMORIES.

As infant arms will cling around
A mother's neck with fondest love,
So mem'ries of her child remain
Ev'n when its spirit dwells above.

And sacredly the mother keeps
The shining curl or little shoe,
The tiny doll or favourite toy
Hid safely from the household view.

And oft the memory of her child
Will waken in that mother's breast,
And tenderly her mind recalls
The babe she to her bosom prest.

Tho' other hearts her love may claim,
Affection still doth twine around
The dear remembrance of her dead,
All thro' life's ever varying round.

And still, amid her grief and pain,
Her soul is sweetly sooth'd and cheer'd,
By knowing that her child is blest,
Though from her vision disappear'd.

Oh ! may it be that mother's aim
To live in unison with God,
And ever humbly strive and trust
To join her child in Heaven's abode.

FACES IN MY ALBUM.

I WAS looking to-night in my album,
Where faces of friends are shrined,
Who communed with me oft in the long ago
When our lives were closely twined.

Long years have gone by since I greeted
Some friends far over the seas,
While some that I knew for a little while
Have passed away like the breeze.

The chords of my heart's deepest feeling
Awoke, when with tender gaze,
I lingered to look on the faces of those
Who have left life's chequered maze.

There are faces of both young and agéd,
Some of whom, long, long ago,
Were called to the homeland of light and love,
Where the storms of earth ne'er blow.

Oh, ye friends who have gone before me,
Ye beckon, I deem, to me ;
And gladly I hope to join you, when God
My spirit from earth shall free

THE AFTERNOON OF LIFE.

THOUGH the years are from me bearing
Many precious things I knew,
Things of promise and possession,
Glowing sun and sparkling dew,
Life's afternoon has charms and graces
Hidden oft in shady places.

Many a fair and fond illusion,
Many a cherish'd hope and dream,
With budding joys too grand to blossom,
Have fled on Time's swift stream—
Life's afternoon has richer treasure,
Higher and serener pleasure.

The priceless boon of memory
I would not change for gold !
And a calmer, wider vision
Than I knew in days of old,
The afternoon of life has given
Many an impulse nearer heaven.

Friends both young and old have faded
From my view while years have fled,
Oft' my pathway has been shaded
Yet nearer to the goal has led,
When afternoon has pass'd, the gloaming
Bringeth rest from toil and roaming.

THE HAME-GAUN 'OOR.

EVEN tho' the morn be merry,
The mid-day fu' o' cheer,
We're ready aye to welcome
The e'enin' drawin' near ;
Then airtin' blythely hameward,
Oor weary, willin' feet
Beat time to inward music—
“The hame-gaun 'oor is sweet.”

The hame-gaun 'oor is sweet aye
When thochtfu' love outflows
Frae bosoms fain to meet aye,
As day begins to close.
The heart has hidden melody,
The een shine brichter far
When lights o' hame are glintin'
Like yon clear guidin' star.

Ye kings an' queens o' hameland,
Ye bairnies big and wee,
The humblest hame's a palace
When love is warm an' free.
Then wisely prize the treasures
Time lays around your feet,
An' mind ye aye be thankfu',
The hame-gaun 'oor is sweet.

Hoo mony a ane that's lanely,
Wi' freends o' youth a' gane,
Would toil lang days richt cheery,
An' bravely thole some pain,

Could they but ken the gladness
 O' stappin' hame at nicht,
 To see kind faces smilin'
 An' firesides shinin' bricht ;

An' mony lanesome wanderers
 Ower foreign lands and seas,
 Would gang a lang hard journey
 An' banish thochts o' ease,
 Could they the pathway travel
 Wi' fitstaps slow or fleet,
 That leads to this pure pleasure—
 The hame-gaun 'oor is sweet.

When life has reached its gloamin'
 An' He wha blest us here
 Says by an angel's whisper,
 " My wearied child come near,"
 Then may each trusting spirit
 The loving message meet,
 An' ken even in the shadows,
 The hame-gaun 'oor is sweet.

WEARIN' AWA'.

THEY are wearin' awa', the tried an' the true,
 The dear freends we kent when oor sorrows were few ;
 Ane after anither, frae life's rugged road,
 They are wearin' awa' to the guid hame o' God.

They are wearin' awa', the young an' the auld,
 They wha were cannie, an' they wha were bauld ;
 Ane after anither, when death gi'es the ca',
 They maun leave wark an' freends, and frae earth wear awa'.

They are wearin' awa' frae sorrow an' sin,
Frae trials an' hardships to sweet peace abune ;
Ane after anither, the strong an' the weak,
They are wearin' awa' to the hame o' the meek.

They are wearin' awa' frae danger an' pain,
Frae life's bitter snaw-blasts an' tempests o' rain ;
Ane after anither they are wearin awa'
To Him wha has promised to hear every ca'.

They are wearin' awa', the loved an' the leal,
Sair, sair are oor hearts, their absence we feel ;
Ane after anither they fade frae oor sicht,
Till their wearin' awa' turns oor day into nicht.

They are wearin' awa', the freends wha were near,
An' some wha were distant, yet never less dear ;
Ane after anither, the distant an' nigh ;
They are wearin' awa' to the mansions on high.

They are wearin' awa' frae oor hearth an' oor hame,
An' never again can this life be the same ;
Ane after anither, as freends leave us here,
May oor faith firmer grow, an' oor God gi'e us cheer.

They are wearin' awa', the tried an' the true,
The dear freends we kent when oor sorrows were few ;
Ane after anither, oor freends kind and fond
Are wearin' awa' to the love that's beyond.

IN GOD'S GOOD KEEPING.

THERE are two worlds wherein doth dwell
The children of "Our Father,"—
On earth they sojourn for a time,
And then above they gather.

We know that here, through toil and care
In waking and in sleeping,
There's peace and joy for all who seek
To be in God's good keeping.

When light and love we strive to know
With true and earnest spirit,
Life's gifts and blessings, we shall find,
Outweigh our highest merit.

In life's fair spring we plough and sow,
Then wait in faith the reaping,
Assured that all our harvest store
Is safe in God's good keeping.

'Tis true that blight and death doth come
To pleasant field and dwelling,
Still, patient hearts will work and hope,
Though dark waves high are swelling.

Even when dear friends are called away,
And eyes are dim with weeping,
We still find comfort in the thought—
They're blest in God's good keeping.

We cannot see them where they are,
And know not what they're doing,
Yet we believe that God's wise plan
Their spirits are pursuing.

The blind eyes see, the deaf ears hear,
The halt and maimed are leaping
In that blest clime, where they abide
For aye in God's good keeping.

IN THE SPRINGTIME.

The 3rd Volunteer Service Company, H.L.I., left Hamilton on 2nd March, and sailed from Southampton on S.S. "Berwick Castle," 3rd March, 1902, for South Africa.

IN the springtime, bright and early,
When the winter days had fled,
And our hearts were sad and lonely,
Southward sailed our soldier lad.

Crowds of eager, anxious faces
Watch'd the good ship sail away,
Watch'd it glide across the waters
Of the dim and distant bay.

Then a last "Good-bye" we wav'd them,
And their cheers in answer heard;
Brave they were, and how we loved them,
But we dared not speak a word.

For a silence deep and solemn
O'er the multitude had crept,
While a mist-cloud gather'd o'er us,
And across our spirits swept.

Then the sunshine seem'd to vanish,
And the skies grew all agrey,
For our soldier lad had left us
To our lone and weary way;

And we knew not when we'd see him,
Nor what the years might bring,
For our boy had gone to battle
For his country and his king.

So we breath'd a prayer to Heaven,
 To guard him through the fight,
 And to lead him on to glory,
 In the cause of truth and right.

—M. W. B.



JOY AND COURAGE.

AWA' WI' LANG FACES !

Awa' wi' lang faces an' dim drumlie een !
 They are nocht but a plague to a nation ;
 Let a blythe, beaming visage an' gleg e'e be seen,
 An' we'll sune ha'e a gran' reformation.

Awa' wi' sour looks and cross cankert words !
 Ower lang ha'e they a' been existant ;
 Let smiles an' sweet sangs like what comes frae the birds
 Send ill-natur' a thoosan' miles distant.

Awa' wi' deep groans an' sorrowfu' sighs !
 They are bad faith for body and spirit ;
 Let happiness ance in your bosom arise,
 An' 'twill chase them a' oot like a ferret.

Awa' wi' deep thinkin' on dark waefu' themes !
 The brichtest o' brains it would weary ;
 Let calm, cautious study, an' sweet pleasin' dreams
 Keep oor heids an' oor hearts licht an' cheery.

Awa' wi' big purses an' close-steekit nieves !

Let your siller aye circulate speedy !

It will keep it frae swindlin' directors an' thieves,

An' dae guid tae yersel' an' the needy.

Awa' wi' wild war, an' a' dark plots an' pranks !

An' let peace an' prosperity flourish ;

Then oor trade will grow brisk, safe an' soon' a' oor banks ;

Mother Earth a' her bairnies will nourish.

Awa' wi' vain sorrow and vanities a' !

Let us try to act bravely, sincerely ;

Sae lang as we've health, meat, an' claes, we are braw,

An' should cherish contentment richt dearly.

Awa' wi' a' thochts an' a' deeds that deprave us !

Sink them deep in oblivion's ocean ;

An' cling tae the Rock that will shelter an' save us,

Tho' strugglin' in fiercest commotion.

Awa' wi' the dogmas and creeds that enslave us !

Let us aim at nae less than perfection ;

Let's rise tae the birthricht God graciously gave us,

An' serve Him wi' gratefu' affection.

CONTENT AN' GUIDWILL.

THO' yammerin' bodies this world misca',

There's a bite, an' a sup, an' claes for us a'

Sae lang as we copy the lark an' the bee,

An' wi' britherly kindness try tae agree.

Some pleasures, an' comforts forby, may be oors,

If we seek na the soorocks, but watch for the flooers ;

A wee bit o' ribbon when tastefully worn

Can help e'en the plainest o' dress to adorn.

If ye want to ha'e freens be freenly yersel',
An' ne'er try to measure wi' inch-tape or ell
The length or the breadth o' anither's guid name,
Tak' what freedom is lawfu', an' aye gi'e the same.

Let oor hearts aye be warm, oor charity wide,
Haud weel doon a' selfishness, envy, an' pride.
Ha'e han's that will help, an' words that can cheer,
An' try a' we can a glad visage to wear.

Tho' the failin's o' ithers may cause us to mourn,
That ne'er can excuse us frae daein' a turn
O' kindness or mercy to ony in need ;
The rule that is golden we daurna mis-heed.

This life micht weel be a happier scene
For ane an' for a', if wi' motes oot oor een,
Leal love in oor hearts an' mair wit in oor brains,
We were healers o' wounds an' soothers o' pains.

This coonsel is hamely an' weel worth regaird ;
We a' ha'e 'some weys o' oor ain' could be spared.
But truly there's need for us a' weel to fill
The happier o' life wi' content an' guidwill.

We're a' growin' aulder, we really should learn
It is not enough that oor leevin' we earn ;
The world needs mendin', sae baith you an' I
Ha'e a pairt to perform—come noo let us try !

LIFE'S WEB.

LIFE has mony a care an' canker,
Life has mony a cross an' crook,
Mony a hurry, mony a hanker,
Mony an angry word an' look.

Life has mony a balm an' blessin',
Mony a smooth an' pleasant mile,
Mony a canty, kind caressin',
Mony a sweet an' sunny smile.

Life has mony a sin an' sorrow,
Mony a vain an' vexin' thocht,
Mony a black ill-bodin' morrow,
Mony a plan that comes to nocht.

Life has mony a noble action,
Mony a cheerin', soothin' sicht,
Mony a hopefu', high attraction,
Mony a beam o' beauty bricht.

Weel an' woe aye blent thegither
Mak' the sum o' human life,
We maun face them baith thro'ither,
Or like cooards flee the strife.

We maun tak' the aid that's sent us,
An' when needit, seek for mair,
We maun use the licht that's lent us,
An' keep workin', foul or fair.

Threads, the darksome an' the shinin',
We maun weave as they are sent,
Ilka shade be deftly twinin',
For oor wark will a' be kent.

We maun weave thro' joys an' sorrows,
Time's swift shuttle aye is gaun,
The web o' life is laid before us
By a wise an skilfu' haun'.

Let us bravely, then, keep weavin',
Wi' patience face each ravell'd hank,
That at last nae bitter grievin'
There may be ower waefu' blank.

And tho' clouds be strongly stormin',
Heid an' hert, an' han's an' feet
Maun their pairts be weel performin'
That the web may be complete.

He wha gied us woof an' warp,
Kens oor weakness an' oor strength,
Nae tyrant He to crush or carp,
He wants us near Himsel' at length.

LIFE'S STRUGGLE,

AND HOW TO FACE IT.

How dark and strange the winding way
Of human life at times appears,
In vain we look and long for light,
Our hopes lie buried 'neath our fears.

Too much we crouch within ourselves,
Too much we on our weakness dwell.
Could we but break our thralldom's bond
And freemen stand, all would be well.

Alas ! how oft weak, wayward man
Turns from the light that safely leads,
And shuns the promised grace and strength,
And fails to grasp the good he needs ?

He looks within himself. He lives
And dies, too oft, within that prison ;
Had one pure beam from Love's bright source
But touched his soul, he might have risen.

The wisest of the sons of men,
The mightiest of all below,
Beyond his limit cannot rise.
There's much no human mind can know.

When doubts perplex and cares harass,
Why will we still increase the load ?
Why do we not, like song-birds, soar
Above the dust on life's rough road ?

Better betimes relax the strain
And drink of pleasure's precious fount,
Than toil and moil with head downcast
As if our spirits ne'er should mount.

Is there one soul who feels the weight
Of life's hard burdens bear him down ?
Shake off all torpor, doubt, despair !
Flee from the sands before you drown !

Seek life's fair uplands, walk with Hope,
Let Faith your close companion be,
To Love's blest angel ope your heart,
And soon your Manhood's Crown you'll see.

A WORD O' CHEER.

COME, callans, quaten doon a wee,
An' lend a willin' ear,
Ev'n though I little ha'e to say,
I'd like that you should hear.

Wi' heid an' han's baith gleg an' deft,
Life's braes aye bravely spiel,
Ower hills o' hope, through mirky vales,
Gang on wi' bosoms leal.

To worthy freends aye firmly haud
Through sunshine, rain, or snaw,
Let kindly smiles an' cheery words
Oft chase some gloom awa'.

There's beauty in the world aroond—
In human kind as weel,
Be ready aye to see an' hear,
An' hae a heart to feel.

Though Fame may never gild oor names
We'll blithely warsle on,
And oft maybe wi' lichter hearts
Than monarchs on a throne.

The kingdom o' the mind is oors,
An' nane can steek the yett ;
To mak' the best o' licht an' shade
Let's see we ne'er forget.

We lo'e oor hames an' dear anes there,
Oor freends baith young an' auld ;
To memories o' byegane years
Oor hearts would ne'er grow cauld.

May mither Scotland hae a share
Within oor range o' thocht,
An' often proudly may we prize
Guid that was dearly bocht.

Whate'er oor minds or han's can dae
To pass oor blessin's doon,
Is wark that honours hamely folk,
An' them wha wear a croon.

AN OPTIMISTIC ODE.

COME, friends, if you can be cheerful,
Let the light and joy of life
To your inmost soul find entrance,
Tho' environed by toil and strife.

Life has its sorrows and shadows,
Rise over them if you may ;
Dark clouds have silver linings,
Long nights merge into day.

Let ears catch the sounds of music
In the pauses of life's rude noise—
Let pure and peaceful pleasures
Make hearts and souls rejoice.

Our minds should explore the treasures
This world of ours contains,
And learn of the priceless jewels
Within love's blest domains.

Look for the roses and sunshine
Amid the thorns and clouds,
Look for the beauty and fragrance
Which dust of earth enshrouds.

Our minds should be our kingdoms,
Where self-control has sway—
We may, if we will, be cheerful
'Mid our duties, stern or gay.

BROTHERLY LOVE.

BROTHERLY love is a blossom fair
Which each of us ever should fondly wear,
At home, at work, and everywhere.

Its beauty and fragrance can soothe and cheer
Those in a lowly or lofty sphere,
In sun or snow, all days of the year.

'Tis a blossom that blooms in heat or cold,
And so precious it cannot be bought or sold,
To those who prize it 'tis "better than gold."

It can change to Eden the desert scene,
Turn the drab and dun to a living green,
And spread over earth a glorious sheen.

Let us pass this blossom bright and sweet
To the friends and neighbours we daily meet
In the field, the market, or the street.

The joy of giving will come thro' this,
The joy of living will grow to bliss,
Life's beauty and grandeur we will not miss.

Peaceful and pure as a white-wing'd dove,
'Tis a flower to cherish all flowers above,
This beautiful blossom of Brotherly Love.

A SONG OF LABOUR.

A SONG for those whose hands are soil'd
With stains of honest labour,—
I speak to you as one would speak
Unto his friend or neighbour.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

Ye bravely toil from morn till night
While health and strength are granted,
Tho' small your gains your help you give
Wherever it is wanted.

All honour to your willing hands,
And patient, hopeful spirits,
Still working, waiting for the time
When wealth shall own your merits.

And give fair share of all your gains
Without a grudge or hanker,
Nor look upon your horny hands
As if they bore a canker.

But give you justice and respect
Altho' your lot is lowly,
Nor think that you are coarser clay
And have not souls as holy !

But now begone all bitter thoughts,
Let's cherish friendship, brothers !
And still be faithful, kind, and true,
Unto ourselves and others.

Come ! let us do our work as well
As head and hands can do it,
Then we will have our heart's reward,
And never once will rue it.

Then do not grudge a little sweat
While you have power to shed it,
'Twill be the test you've done your best,
And will sustain your credit.

All honest work is useful work,
And tho' the man who pays you
Just gives as little as he can,
And seldom deigns to praise you,

Still sing, "Come soon, the happy time,
When working man and master
Shall strive alike for other's good,
And both shall prosper faster."

THE POET'S POWER.

POESY, thy charms have often
Cheered my soul since youthful years,
And the tender strains can soften
Hearts that seldom melt in tears.

Thou art like some blessed angel,
Bringing beauty, truth, and love—
Preaching wide a pure evangel—
Leading willing hearts above.

Master minds of bygone ages
Have bequeathed us priceless dow'rs—
In their rich and fadeless pages
We have many precious hours.

There we revel in the beauty
Of the poet's wondrous art,
There brave deeds of love and duty—
Pain and pathos touch the heart.

When our lives are dark and dreary,
There we find both joy and light,
When of noisy mirth we're weary,
There we find a quiet delight.

There are nameless charms and graces
In the poet's web of words—
Fair and sweet as dear friends' faces,
Gladsome as the springtime birds.

THE TEMPLE OF SILENCE.

WHEN scorn or injustice or wrath overtakes us,
And bandying words would make worse what is bad,
'Twill be well if our better self never forsakes us—
In the temple of silence new power may be had.

Good spirits that pity poor blundering mortals,
Oh ! keep us, and save us from impatient speech,
Lead us in triumph within the safe portals
Of that temple we never unaided could reach.

Lay thy hand of control on every fierce feeling,
Pour a balm on our wounds, e'en the wounds of a friend,
Come with thy gentle, soft, soothing healing,
In the temple of silence constrain us to bend.

Set a seal on our lips, quench the fire that is burning,
Make us pause, think, and conquer 'mid turmoil or din,
Till the thunderstorm's over, and sunshine returning,
Oh, shield us, the temple of silence within.

WAIT AND WORK.

How little we think of the wondrous ways
Of a Providence wise and kind ?
How seldom we either rejoice or praise
With the strength of heart and mind ?

And often we do not trust half enough,
Nor with patience calmly wait ;
When the way seems long, and strange, and rough,
We murmur at adverse fate.

In scantiest hours and the dreariest days,
We forget we have much of good,
And blindly we wander in life's dense maze,
Oft hungry, 'mid plenty of food.

On that which is lacking our thoughts are fixed,
And we foolishly, vainly yearn
For comforts and pleasures, with pain unmixed,
And slowly the truth we learn.

Yet Providence all the while is there,
And, if slowly, is surely bringing
Our present good, and a larger share,
That will set our hearts a-singing.

Let us wait and work, and work and wait,
Having faith in a Providence wise,
Patiently bear with a lowly state,
And Heavenward lift our eyes.

LIFE'S SHADOWS.

WHY is it our lives are clouded with shade?
Why fadeth our sunlight so soon?
The day dawn that cometh in glory arrayed
Too often grows dark ere the noon.

We know why the tide coming inward so grand,
As swiftly recedes far away,
Nor lingers to gambol with shells on the sand
Where the children in happiness play.

We know why the glad-hearted choristers all
Grow silent and leave us forlorn,
Though fondly we love their melodious call,
And the nest in yon flower-laden thorn.

Yet much do we marvel with sadness of heart
Why our race must such suffering bear,
And why comes so oft to the sensitive heart
Cross currents of sorrow and care.

'Tis only a part of life's purpose we see,
But Faith still maintains, ' There's a plan
That from blemish and all imperfection is free
For its Author was God and not man ! '

We are all to be tested and trained for our good,
In this finite and shadowy sphere,
And they who the ordeals well have withstood
Will at length in God's heaven appear.

The perplexing enigmas of this lowly life
Will all be made perfectly plain ;
From doubt's dreary mazes, from pitiful strife
A freedom of bliss we shall gain.

But now we must keep looking straight to the light,
And yield not to murmur nor faint ;
There awaiteth the victor a loftier height
Far beyond every earth-born restraint.

BE MERRY !

*Not the mirth that springs from madness,
Not the mirth that ends in sadness.*

Boys and girls, bright and free,
It is good to see you gay ;
Life's fair morning comes but once,
Then be merry while you may.

Youths and maidens, all aglow
With warm love, life's dawning day
Soon will merge to noontide toil,
Then be merry while you may.

Wives and husbands, round whose feet
Precious, prattling children play,
You have joys which soon will pass,
So be merry while you may.

Let us all life's sunshine prize—
At daybreak, noon, or twilight grey—
Grateful hearts find cause for joy :
We'll be merry while we may.

Hearts, where love and kindness dwell,
Lightest feel this life's decay ;
Since God peace and gladness gives,
Be ye merry while ye may.

DINNA DREAD THE UNSEEN DAY.

Ower often oor fears hae played us a plisky,
An' afflicted us sair wi' dangers unseen,
They hae led us up-hill an' doon dale in the darkness,
Until we hae trembled wi' agony keen.

We hae stumbled alang wi' dismal forebodings,
Oor backs to the licht should hae guided oor een,
Ower often atweel we've been fulish an' faithless
In dreadin' the days that we never had seen.

As we journey through life, let's seek the best guidance,
Lookin' onward an' upward, step blithely alang,
An' tis better, a hunner times ower, than lamentin',
To enliven the road wi' a cheery bit sang.

Let's hae faith in oorsel's, an' hope for the shinin'
O' licht that will glint thro' the darksome screen,
Wi' patience an' courage keep steadily strivin',
But ne'er dread the day that never was seen.

SCRIEVIN' ON.

THOUGH your road be dreich an' lanely,
'Neath a lift baith damp an' grey,
Scrievin' on wi' spunk an' smeddum,
Ye will clim' the steyst brae.

Juist by stappin' brave an' steady
On the bank or through the bog,
Ower the greensward or the heather,
A' win' through wha onward jog.

Mirkest nichts hae aye a mornin',
Sadness yields to lightsome cheer,
Pain may lift the sneck to pleasure—
Hopefu' aye your fitstaps steer.

Langest journeys hae an' endin',
Highest hills hae aye a tap,
The sun ere lang may clear be shinin',
Though e'en noo the mists enwrap.

Whiles a bield fu' lown an' cosy
Gi'es us a' a welcome fain ;
An' aye "oor Faither's" hame is ready
For ilk humble-hearted wean.

LOOKING BACKWARDS.

'Tis well sometimes to follow
The fair enchantress Hope,
Within the wondrous portals
Her magic key can ope.

'Tis well in life's bright springtide
To roam in Fancy's realm,
And trace a glowing future,
With wisdom at the helm.

For still we should remember
That present actions mould
The time that may be coming,
When we are growing old.

Our past has made our present,
And still if we are wise,
We'll scan with eager vision
The path that backward lies.

We'll live again sweet seasons
Of gladness, love, and truth,
And learn anew some lessons
Forgot since sunny youth.

Yea, though we glance where broken
Hopes, joys, and dreams are strewn,
It will not all be sorrow
If hearts have braver grown.

Still may our mental vision
Grow clearer and more keen,
And learn to see what life may be
From what it might have been.

Thus from the past and present,
Our lives should still expand,
Till in the great hereafter
They rise to something grand.

ASPIRATION.

ON the higher ground in heaven
Where no strife can ever be,
Where nor death nor danger dwelleth,
Every one is ever free.

Oh, the long'd-for, blessed freedom,
No temptation, sin, or pain :
Surely worth our bravest struggle,
Such a life of peace to gain.

Here is many a cross and failure,
Here are weakness and unrest ;
There amid the saintly victors
We shall reach our manhood's crest.

We shall live to love and honour
All that's noble, good, and true,
And may wonder why we faltered
When our joys were faint and few.

Let us then, though sad or weary,
Still be loyal to the end,
And endure with hope and courage,
Praying God His grace to send.

Let us learn to work and suffer
With a patient, tranquil heart,
Even when our dearest kindred
From our circle must depart.

There's a life sublime and holy
On high heaven's bracing hills,
And each soul that overcometh
There will triumph o'er earth's ills.

May we then with valiant spirits,
Work and wait with upward aims,
Blending gladness with our sorrow,—
Live the life that never shames.

NIL DESPERANDUM.

YOUTHS going to work in the world's wide field,
Let not your energies hopelessly yield ;
Strive with your might for God and the right,
Fearlessly facing the foes that you fight ;
With a song on your lips, and a smile on your face,
Swerve not a step from your heavenward race ;
Shrink not, when meeting with trials and care—
Nil Desperandum!—never despair !

Though your morning of life be chequered with strife,
And thick clouds of trouble and sorrow be rife,
Use the means ye possess, and trust God for the rest ;
He manfully strives who is doing his best.
Be courageous ! be true ! and calmly pursue
The pathway of honour, though friends should be few ;
And this be your watchword—foul weather or fair—
Nil Desperandum!—never despair !

Ye who have reached unto manhood's ripe years,
And tasted awhile of this life's hopes and fears,
When ye find that the struggle's just newly begun,
And much of the conquest remains to be won,
With a brave, daring front, and a confident heart,
Act, like a true man, your God-given part ;
Brace your hearts, nerve your arms, for fresh warfare
prepare—

Nil Desperandum !—never despair !

Do ye long to gain knowledge, and win for yourself
A pleasure more pure than that borrowed from pelf ?
Would ye fain have a name and position among
The ranks of the valiant, the noble, and strong ?
Do ye wish for a friend, kind, steadfast, and wise,
To cheer you and aid you, while seeking to rise ?
Persevere and be patient, no true effort spare—

Nil Desperandum !—never despair !

Ye who the heat of the day have endured,
And are reaping the harvest your toil has procured,
Though the autumn of life should furrow your brow
Cease not from labouring cheerfully now ;
Toil on at your garnering, bind up your sheaves,
No servant who's worthy his work ever leaves
Till the Master doth call him, the guerdon to share—

Nil Desperandum !—never despair !

Though your hair turns to grey, and your bodies will bend,
Be faithful, be diligent, stay to the end ;
Let hope's beacon guide you and happiness dwell
In your bosoms, though often with sadness they swell ;
He who gave you the mission will give you the strength,
And will give you sweet rest, and reward too, at length ;
The bruised He will bind, and the broken repair—

Nil Desperandum !—never despair !

And ye who are tottering well nigh to the grave,
 Even ye should be hopeful, and useful, and brave ;
 Hopeful? yes, surely, since God has you given
 So much while on earth, He will yet give you Heaven ;
 May the thought bear you on 'mid turmoil and din,
 'Mid scenes of sweet grandeur, of squalor and sin,
 Let faith's fadeless vision be fixed "over there"—

Nil Desperandum!—never despair !

Though your eyes should grow dim, your locks thin and
 hoary,
 Still pray that your souls may be ripened for glory ;
 Yes, pray, and work too, with your fast failing powers,
 Improving, redeeming, your few fleeting hours ;
 Your example may lead, and your council may guide,
 The young who are nursing fond hopes by your side—
 Earth's scenes grow more cloudy, and Heaven more fair—

Nil Desperandum!—never despair !



TIMES AND SEASONS.

A GOOD NEW YEAR.

To readers all, from young to old,
 The poor, and those with piles of gold,
 The stay-at-homes, and they who've gone
 To Arctic or to torrid zone,
 To all, in any hemisphere,
 We wish a hearty Good New Year.

To those who bravely till the ground,
And those who make the wheels go round,
To those who dig the coal and shale,
Those who succeed and those who fail,
To weak or strong this word of cheer—
We wish you all a Good New Year.

Though often wet with chilly dew,
Her flickering torch Hope lifts anew,
And forward goes with footsteps light,
Into a year that's young and bright ;
What wondrous visions oft appear,
Stirred by the words, " A Good New Year."

JANUARY 25TH, 1887.

AGAIN we hail the natal day,
Of Scotia's king of song ;
And many a gay and grateful lay,
Flows from the poet throng.

And thousands, in whose hearts the tide
Of kindred feelings spring,
Both far and wide, with joy and pride,
His songs recite or sing.

With music, " flow of soul," and mirth,
Men hail his spreading light ;
And o'er the earth, by hall or hearth,
They laud his worth to-night.

As years and years still come and go,
E'en more and more we find
His heart's warm glow, his soul's rich flow,
Were for all human-kind.

THE MEMORY OF BURNS.

An Anniversary Tribute.

THE Memory o' Burns is dear
To every Scottish heart,
And countless sons of other lands
Admire his tuneful art.
We fondly sing his thrilling songs—
The gay and sad by turns,
And cherish wi' a warm regard—
The Memory o' Burns !

The Memory o' Burns will bloom
Wi' fragrance fresh and sweet,
While rosebuds open 'neath our eye,
And daisies at our feet.
Leal Scotsmen, all the world o'er,
When "Janwar win'" returns,
Will sing wi' grateful, glowing hearts
The Memory o' Burns !

The Memory o' Burns awakes
Sweet joys o' bygane days,
When by the "Cottar's" hearth we conn'd
His artless, charming lays,
And learned from him to laud the man
Who glittering grandeur spurns,
And prize the manly worth that gilds—
The Memory o' Burns !

The Memory o' Burns demands
The brotherhood of man—
Progress in every noble cause,
With Virtue in the van :
The poet's patriotic soul
For "higher manhood" yearns,
And each responsive breast will bless
The Memory o' Burns !

A PLOUGHMAN'S SANG.

Oot to the ploo i' the mornin', lads,
Wi' your horses sleek an' trig,
Then whistle ye on richt blithely, lads,
On the lea or stibble rig.

Oot to the ploo i' the mornin', lads,
A' snod wi' leggins an' belts,
The en' rigs are often miry, lads,
When snaw wi' a saft win' melts.

Oot to the ploo i' the mornin', lads,
Syne steadily gang your roon's,
Set up your furs fu' strauchtly, lads,
A' ye hardy plooman loons.

Oot to the ploo i' the mornin', lads,
Though the licht be dim an' grey,
Ilka roond brings cornin' nearer, lads,
An' next comes the close o' day.

Oot to the ploo i' the mornin', lads,
Mind, the langest winter leads
To the springtime clear an' cheery, lads,
An' the time o' sawin' seeds.

CANDLEMAS DAY.

CANDLEMAS day is a-comin',
A fine auld day indeed,
When mony a ane is hummin'
An ancient Candlemas screed—
“Should the weather be foul or fair”—
Ye ken the rest—I'll say nae mair.

Candlemas day, be't saft or shinin',
Is aye a welcome day ;
Sae my muse is faintly twinin'
This hamely Candlemas lay ;
Whate'er the weather, it leads us by
The Janwar' win's an' murky sky.

Candlemas day brings a-nearer
The spring-time buds an' flo'ers :
It opens the yett to clearer
Blue skies and kin'lier sho'ers.
Candlemas day be't dull or clear
Brings the laverock's sangs fu' near.

Candlemas day is a-comin',
A fine auld day indeed,
When mony a ane is hummin'
A hamely Candlemas screed—
“Should the weather be foul or fair”—
Ye ken the rest—I'll say nae mair.

A SKYLARK'S SONG.

BACK to my native uplands,
I went in early spring,
And soon from above the greensward
I heard a skylark sing.

I stood awhile to listen,
And watch the singer too,
Till, singing, it soared upward
Into a sky of blue.

Sweet it was to my hearing,
That melody floating down,
'Mid scenes beloved and peaceful,
Far from the surging town.

I wondered, "Is this an omen
That my visits to old time friends
Will be as sweet and pleasant
Ere daylight calmly ends?"

And so, while larks were singing,
I passed from place to place,
And welcomes glad and smiling,
Were seen on every face.

SPRING-TIME.

ONCE more bright Spring advances,
Then coyly hides again,
Till even brighter glances
She throws o'er hill and glen.

She sends her herald blossoms
Ere wintry storms are o'er,
We wear them on our bosoms,
And wait to welcome more.

She gives her grandest singers
A message rich and sweet,
And e'en when Winter lingers
Opes flow'rets at our feet.

She touches blacken'd hedges
With her fair finger tips,
And soon along their edges
Are myriad vernal lips.

She skips o'er faded grasses,
When, lo ! there springs to view,
A beauty that surpasses
The artists' softest hue.

She smiles and breathes around us,
And soon we feel and see,
That her rare charms have bound us,
Her lovers fond are we.

Then, quickly come, dear maiden,
Unveil thy gladsome face,
And cheer the sorrow-laden,
With thy pure, gentle grace.

The weak and worn will greet thee
With sweet, reviving hope,
While merry children meet thee,
And doors and gateways ope.

A SANG FOR THE HARROWS.

GANG merrily on wi' the harrows, my lads,
While spring-time breezes blaw
When the seed is lownly happit, my lads,
The braird will sprout fu' braw.

Chorus—Aye single an' double,
An' to and fro,
Aye jingle an' hobble
The harrows go.

Gang merrily on wi' the harrows, my lads,
The "tid" may sune gae by,
Weel let the seed be covered, my lads
While the grun is firm an' dry.

CHORUS.

Gang merrily on wi' the harrows, my lads,
Work aye wi' richt gude will,
Rest's sweet when legs are weary, lads,
Wi' harrowin' howm or hill.

CHORUS.

Gang merrily on wi' the harrows, my lads,
The gude seed snugly hap,
Aye dae your best, then hope, my lads,
For a gudely gouden crap.

CHORUS.

AN APRIL SONG.

Soon we're going where the sowing
Now goes on apace,
O'er our outing we'll be shouting
With a merry face.

Birds are singing, buds are springing
In the lone retreats,
Light is streaming, sunshine gleaming
In the lanes and streets.

O'er the valleys, courts, and alleys
Comes the gentle spring,
Cease all moping, joyful hoping
April breezes bring.

No more glooming, flowers are blooming
In rural regions fair,
Cease from pity, ev'n the city
Spring's bright blessings share.

A CLUSTER OF PRIMROSES.

A CLUSTER of pretty pink primroses,
And each with a soft golden eye,
Peeping modestly out from setting of leaves
To the broadening blue of the sky.

By the maiden I love, all others above,
In my hands were the primroses placed ;
Glad feelings they stir—they are emblems of her—
That maiden, so gentle and chaste.

A cluster of pretty pink primroses—
Their beauty I have not yet told ;
To me they are dearer, sweeter, and fairer
Than treasures of art or of gold.

I would thank thee again, dear maid of the glen,
For the gift of these beautiful flowers ;
May bright, fragrant blossoms aye bloom by thy path
And point thee to Life's fadeless bowers.

GREEN AND GOLD.

JUST within a garden gateway,
By a mansion grim and old,
Side by side two trees are standing—
One of green and one of gold.

Stately wardens, ever guarding,
In the landscape features bold ;
Nature with her fingers deftly
Twines their leaves of green and gold.

Oh ! it is a charming picture,
When the flowers of May unfold,
And the glorious sun is glowing
On the green and on the gold.

Far away some vainly travel,
Rarest wonders to behold,
Heeding little homely grandeur
Like the trees of green and gold.

THIS BONNIE MONTH O' MAY.

My cherished friend of bygone years,
And still my friend to-day,
I thank you for your gift of flowers—
This bonnie month o' May.

The floral treasures you have sent,
A fragrant bright array,
Can whisper sweet words in my ears—
This bonnie month o' May.

The din and heat of city street
Makes fancy fly away,
To flowery sward and leafy glade—
This bonnie month o' May.

The songs of birds are sweet to hear,
The trees in grandeur sway,
While glorious sunshine beams o'er all—
This bonnie month o' May.

There's beauty from the sunrise hour,
On to the "gloamin' grey,"
There's richer charms than pen can tell—
This bonnie month o' May.

SUMMER.

OH, the bonnie Summer days,
When in shady woodland ways,
And on hilltops, haughs, and braes,
The grass is fresh and green, and blossoms fair are seen,
In the sunshine's glowing rays.

Oh! my heart leaps with delight,
As at morning, noon, and night,
Summer's glory glows so bright—
The springing corn and grass, waving grandly as I pass,
'Neath Heaven's radiant light.

Earth and air, and sky combine
To give the strong, and those who pine
Sweet draughts of Nature's cheering wine,
Let's be thankful then and gay every precious summer day,
Happy in these gifts divine!

There are scenes so fresh and fair,
Where age and youth may share
Summer's treasures rich and rare,
That bosoms which were sad may now be gay and glad,
Finding balm in nature everywhere.

Oh, the bonnie Summer days,
Oft, in thought I fondly gaze
On the wild flowers all ablaze,
Or list the burnie's song and the tuneful feathered throng,
As they swell their notes of praise.

THE HOLIDAYS.

COME, ye busy sons of toil,
Cease awhile each wonted task ;
Go ye forth to sea or soil,
In the summer sunshine bask.

Come ye wives, and sweethearts too,
All ye tiny toddling tots,
Go where skies are broad and blue
Linger by the beauty spots.

Leave the smoke, the weary noise
Of the workshop and the street,
Go, with all your heart rejoice,
Where all Nature's charms are sweet.

Happy be your leisure hours
While ye stroll by heath or hill,
'Mong the woods, or rocks or flowers
Or where waves are never still.

Be it near, or be it far,
Go ye with a smiling face,
With eye that sparkles like a star,
To some glad and restful place.

A CYCLING SONG.

AWAY we go from shop and street,
Away, away on a pair of wheels,
Away to the country green and sweet,
Till freedom's joy our spirit feels.

We pedal our way with right good will,
We sing and laugh on the plain.
We in silence bend to climb the hill,
Then we forward rush again.

On the landscape wide we gaze with pride
And smile to the blooming flowers ;
While on slender steed of steel we ride
And enjoy the passing hours.

The whirr of the wheels delights our ears
As we speed thro' the bracing air.
The changing scene our spirit cheers
While we steer our course with care.

THE HARVEST FIELD.

THE harvest field is a cheerful field,
When the corn is rustling yellow,
A deep delight the bright hours yield
'Mong the golden grain all mellow ;
The harvest field is a happy field,
For our hearts are light and grateful,
And joy is ever a blessed shield
From thoughts that are hard or hateful.

Oh, the harvest field is a merry field,
When friends their aid are lending
The sheaves to bind, or the scythes to wield,
While corn with the breeze is bending ;
Yes, harvest time is a gay, glad time,
In the pleasant autumn weather,
As the scythes swing round with a hearty sound,
And we work with a will together.

OCTOBER.

WELCOME again, thou pensive month,
With all thy tranquil graces,
That thrill the heart and please the eye
In peaceful, rural places.

October, thou hast many charms
Unto the thoughtful mind ;
Thou hast a beauty all thine own,
And thou art calm and kind.

After the glow and grandeur
Of Summer days so bright,
She comes with chastened splendour,
And soft and mellow light.

Her chilly morns and foggy eves
A kindly warning bring,
Of coming days of cloud and storm
And Winter's stern ice king.

She brings the red-breast's homely notes
Even to our very doors ;
And sees the husbandman complete
His precious harvest stores.

An old magician too, she is ;
The woods that Spring made green,
She beautifies with varied tints,
Transforming all the scene.

Come then, old grey October, come,
And soothe our souls with peace :
Still breathe a calm within our breasts
Till seasons here shall cease.

THE LATE HAIRST O' 1907.

A SPRING an' simmer, cauld an' wat,
Sair taigled a' the craps ;
The neeps that grew were wee an' hard,
Wi' lang an' flo'ery taps.

September cam' wi' kindly breath,
An' ripened weel the corn,
But dreary wat October days
Made mony hearts forlorn.

The stooks that stude for weeks on en'
Were steepit through an' through,
Bosom an' ban' o' sheaves grew green,
For ne'er a snell win' blew.

The farmers' lot was waesome hard,
Frae mornin' dawn till nicht,
Few were the sunny blinks that cam'
To mend the cheerless plicht.

Ower mony a field the ripened corn
Unsickled still was seen,
Some stan'in straucht, some sair laid doon,
When roond cam' Hallowe'en.

Ower countrysides, far, far apairt,
Whaur stooky fields were rife,
Auld men an' women ne'er had seen
Sic hairst in a' their life.

At length the langsome rain blew by,
Baith sun an' win' cam' back,
Wat sheaves were lowsed, an' stooks were turned,
Upbuilt was mony a stack.

Alas ! alas ! again the rain
Sair drookit a' afield,
To eident farmer folk this hairst
A puir return will yield.

That better hairsts may come, e'en till
Young gowden heids grow grey,
I'm sure a' kindly, thochtfu' folk
Richt earnestly will pray.

HALLOWE'EN.

HALLOWE'EN is no forgotten,
Scots folk winna let it dee ;
Lang an' weel they've lo'ed the season
Wi' its glamourie and glee.

Mithers tell their blythe wee bairnies
O' the charmin' times langsyne,
An' the mony curious cantrips
That their mem'ries winna tine.

They wha in oor schules are teachin'
The "young idea how to shoot"
Wisely tell o' social customs—
An' let the bairnies suner oot !

Fun an' frolic still are rampant,
Lanterns, guises, aye are seen ;
Baith in country an' in city
There's honour paid to Hallowe'en.

NOVEMBER.

THERE are few, alas ! who love thee,
Thou month of darksome days ;
Yet we need not blame nor slight thee,
Although we faintly praise.

Of beauty and of brightness
Thou hast a slender share ;
Thy shrubs and trees are leafless,
Thy sodden fields are bare.

Thy day-dawn cometh slowly
When thy long nights are past ;
And often misty vapours
Through day's brief hours will last.

By gentle, easy stages
Thy ways to winter lead ;
And while thou art not charming,
We welcome thee indeed.

We still would give thee honour,
For by thy link is bound
The changing months together
In one harmonious round.

The lowliest and plainest
Have still a part to play,
A place to fill that's needful—
So speed thee on thy way.

DECEMBER.

My natal month, I love thee well,
And yet thou art not fair nor bright,
Save when grim Boreas works his spell,
And dingy scenes are changed to white.

Short days and dull December brings,
On road and field there's little cheer,
In leafless grove no fond bird sings
A requiem for the dying year.

The ploughman on the broad lea field
From dawn till dark holds on his way,
At night the cheerful ingle's bield
Consoles him for the stormy day.

Or should the frost-king rule the air,
The curlers then on loch and pond
Their game pursue with pleasure rare,
And far their jovial shouts resound.

They who must toil from morn till night
Oft in a chilly dreary round,
Find by the evening fireside bright
Sweet joys that nowhere else are found.

Thy fleeting days, December, cause
Our hearts to give some earnest heed
To higher things, and oft we pause
To ponder, ere again we speed.

Come, dear December, come once more,
Thou shalt not lack a welcome gay,
Give us glad Christmas as of yore,
And bring us joyous Hogmanay.

YULE-TIDE.

A YULE lilt fu' cheery, let's sing to the praise
 O' Yule-tide aye welcome in snaw or in haze :
 Leal hearts should be kindly an' thankfu' an' fain
 When the season o' Christmas comes ance again.

Ye wha lo'e Yule-tide, I'm yours heart an' haun
 In uphaudin' a season baith gracious an' gran' ;
 Richt gratefu' I own that for upliftin' cheer
 There's nae ither like Christmas day in the year.

Cauld, cauld is the heart, an' unthochtfu' the mind
 That coonts na as precious, consolin', an' kind
 The blessings that cam' frae high Heaven to earth,
 When the foremost o' Christmas days had its birth.

A hantle o' memories shimmer aroond,
 Some lichtsome an' happy, an' some wi' a stoond ;
 We tenderly ponder on freends wha are gane,
 As roond comes the season o' Christmas again.

 SEEING THE SHOPS.

YE wha on ferlies like to gaze,
 Come busk ye wi' your brawest claes ;
 Ye leddies don a dainty goon,
 Syne dan'er oot to view the toon.

Here's Christmas cairds, a gran' array,
 The sweet an' braw, the rich an' gay,
 Wi' gloves and muffs, and scarves and ties,
 That bonniest lass an' lad micht prize.

There's fal-de-rals an' gew-gaws here,
 To suit the daft days o' the year ;
 Rare pictur' books for youth or wean,
 An' toys micht fill a railway train.

But hirsle yont, see what a sicht
 O' holly leaves wi' berries bricht,
 An' bouracks big o' cake an' bun
 To grace the feasts an' spice the fun.

Here's turkeys, geese, an' prime roast beef,
 O' aulden Yule-tide fare the chief—
 With or withoot may ilka yin
 Hae happiness the heart within.



PLACES AND EVENTS.

MY AIN COUNTRYSIDE.

A Ramble Round West Calder Parish.

REMEMBRANCE is an artist rare,
 Who by some magic power
 Can paint for us scenes dear and fair,
 As swift as summer shower.

Tho' far from Breich an' a' the burns
 That ripple thro' her glens,
 My memory fondly oft returns
 To ilka scene it kens.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

Frae Limefield burn to Cock-my-Lane,
Awa' near Climpy Tap,
'Tween Breich's lang glen and Thirlstane,
I ken maist every stap.

Grey Leavenseat an' Bye-law-hill,
Gloud Morrison's white hoose,
Stern Tormie wheel so broon an' still,
Whaur muircocks craw fu' croose.

The grim Black Mount an' Hendrey's Course,
Whaur 'mang the muirlan' springs,
The young Mouse Water has its source,
An' rins ower "fairy" rings.

The muirlan's bare roond Cobbinshaw
Are charming simmer scenes,
But when snell win's o' winter blaw
There's scarce a bield that screens.

Blink Bonnie wi' its winsome name,
Blaw Wearie's ruined wa's—
I tell nae here its tale o' shame,
Nor retribution's laws.

I maunna miss dear auld Bushdyke,
Nor dearer auld Westburn,
To Scholieburn an' Claffer Syke
My memory whiles maun turn.

The bonnie glen o' Gavieside,
An' Brotherton's braw braes,
When robed in leafy, floral pride
Are worthy sweetest praise.

To mak' a langsome story short,
It may be here confess't,
That oft my fancy roams athort
These scenes baith east, an' west.

It would but weary some to tell
O' favourite hichts an' howes,
The sparkling spring, the clear cauld well,
Green glens and grassy knowes.

But aye within my inmost breast,
I'll cherish fond an' fast
The countryside I love the best,
And will love till the last.

CRAIGHEID.

*(On receiving a pictorial card of dwelling house,
March, 1907.)*

WARM thanks I send my worthy friend,
Ye hae been kind indeed,
Wi' fond regard I prize your card,
"The picture o' Craigheid."

In years gane by, baith you and I
Oft ran wi' muckle speed,
In laddie days doon yon steep braes—
The braes beside Craigheid.

Time was na' dreigh when by the Breich
We played in flowery mead,
Or chased the bees, and speeled the trees,
In sicht o' dear Craigheid.

To you and me, baith hoose and tree
Are worth a blithsome screed ;
Freends leal an' kind oft come to mind,
When thinkin' o' Craigheid.

THE TINKLER'S CORNER.

TIME slips awa', but leaves us whiles
Some precious, fadeless treasure ;
It may be freendly words or smiles,
Auld trystin' trees or rustic stiles,
Aye something that gi'es pleasure.

Sweet memories o' laddie days,
Wi' hirsels roond me grazin',
A moment's thocht can clearly raise,
Sae 'mid the city's sun and haze,
Auld times I oft am praisin'.

To me the valley o' the Breich
Has mony a scene byor'nar,
Which ne'er seems dreary, dull, nor dreich,
An' memory oft will scamper skeich
Straucht to the Tinkler's Corner.

I there can view for miles aroond
The countryside I cherish,
An' note each moorlan' sicht an' soond,
Which even in life's busy roond
Frae memory winna perish.

The travellin' Tinkler loons, langsyne,
Intent on cosy campin',
There on the sward would sup or dine,
Then sweetly sleep 'neath Luna's shine,
When tired wi' langsome trampin'.

On that braeside when thunder pealed,
 An' storms cam' helter-skelter,
 At times the Corner's welcome bield
 Baith herds an' harvesters would shield
 When naewhere near was shelter.

The Tinkler's Corner's but a nook,
 Yet a' aroond in sicht o't,
 Held siccar by a magic hook,
 Are "mem'ries dear" could fill a book,
 Sae dinna ye mak' licht o't !

Twa dry-stane dykes at angles sat
 Near to a moorlan' dreary,
 Such is the place I'll ne'er forget,
 An' blythe I'll gang to see it yet,
 When spring-time larks sing cheery.

* BUSHDYKE.

FAR awa' on a muirlan' big and broon,
 Miles and miles frae the tiresome toon,
 Stan's a wee cot hoose wi' trees aroon'—

Bushdyke.

There's a big kailyard ahint the hoose,
 Whaur in winter the mawkin' comes fu' croose,
 An' nibbles awa' like a hungry moose—

Bushdyke.

*On the large sheep farm of Handaxwood, near Levensseat,
 in West Calder Parish.

Near to the doorstep the grass is growin',
A wee bit oot ower a syke is flowin',
A wee bittie far'er the lambs are rowin'—

Bushdyke.

The win' blaws free ower the muirlan' wide,
There's scarcely a bush whaur a bairn micht hide,
When the storm comes doon like a rushin' tide—

Bushdyke.

Tho' laigh and auld the biggin' may be,
The hamestead there has charms for me,
An' often in memory's glass I see—

Bushdyke.

There's rowth o' freedom an' caller air,
An' they wha're contented wi' simple fare,
Can o' joys and comforts hae decent share—

Bushdyke.

In an aulder biggin' that noo is doon,
On that same muirlan' big and broon,
My forbears leev'd in their ain wee "toon"—

Bushdyke.

There's mony a ane that coonts it tame,
An' me for my fond auld notions blame,
But aye in my heart I lo'e it the same—

Bushdyke.

THE AULD DROVE LOAN.

(In primitive days of the past, the drove loan was a kind of highway from north to south, and vice versa, over which highland, and other cattle and sheep were taken throughout Scotland, and south of the Tweed. As is generally known, one drove loan crossed Breich Water west of Westwood House, and another near Breich Station, East Handaxwood.)

SINCE ancient times when roads were scarce,
An' railways there were nane,
We still can trace some rugged tracks
Whaur flocks an' herds hae gane ;
It plainly speaks o' langsyne days
When "motors" were unknown,
An' tells o' times when fords were rife—
The silent auld drove loan.

Those primal pathways whaur oor sires
Aft toddled slow an' lang
Ahint their sheep an' hornless nowt,
Hae ne'er been famed in sang ;
But surely yet its no ower late
To sing o' suns that shone,
Fair flowers that bloomed, an' feet that trod
The rugged auld drove loan.

Nae telegraphs, nor cycles flashed
By rural hill an' glen,
The "news" gaed roond by "word o' mouth"
At fair an' wide fire-en' ;
Nae shoals o' bonnie pictur' views,
Nae ringing up by 'phone,
A simpler life oor grandsires lived
Beside the auld drove loan.

Some things were better then, an' some
A hantle better noo ;
Wi' tender glance, we'll scan the auld
An' bravely face the new ;
Time's hoary landmarks fade and change,
As progress still rolls on,
But present aye is linked to past
By mony an auld drove loan.

Auld mem'ries whiles to tender hearts
Can bring a painfu' stoond,
Sae whiles they bring a gleefu' joy
Wi' mony a charmin' soond ;
O' ancient things an' bygane freends
I'd speak wi' kindly tone,
An' hae a lown place in my heart
For every auld drove loan.

THE BURNIE.

LITTLE rills among the heather,
Two or three, or maybe more,
By and by they flow together,
Flow as one the moorland o'er.

Near the water-shed all lonely,
Where the sheep so quietly graze,
Their companions wild birds only,
On the bracing upland braes.

Here where moss and heath are clinging
My burnie sings its first low song,
Tiny blossoms fresh are springing
By its margin all along.

Fair and calm the scenes, when Summer
O'er the moorland grandly glows,
And when Autumn's busy hummer
To the heath flower fondly goes.

Onward winds my burnie sparkling
In the sunlight bright and free,
Then in shade it eddies darkling,
Silenced all its song of glee.

Again it ripples round the dwelling,
Where merry children shout and play,
And songs of love and hope are swelling
From youthful swain or maiden gay.

On my burnie flows still singing,
Taking here and giving there,
Smiling to the verdure clinging
On its banks so green and fair.

WOODSIDE.

IN summer the hedgerows and plantings
Have a beauty that none dare deride,
While the tall trees around the old garden
Lend a charm to the home at Woodside.

When grasses and wild flowers are blooming
With foliage waving in pride,
Among many fair scenes where I journey
Are the braes and the glens of Woodside.

There is endless array of rich grandeur
In the valley of Avon so wide,
And sights that are soothing and restful
By the hollows and hills of Woodside.

There is Westfield, Lochcote, and Torphichen,
Where clear waters peacefully glide
Round the loftier heights overlooking
The well-cultured fields of Woodside.

When with glorious tints in the autumn
The trees and the bushes are dyed,
There's a wonderful wealth of rare beauty
Round the home of my friends at Woodside.

May that home, and each home in the valley,
Be ever by Heaven supplied
With blessings of love, peace, and pleasure,
While harmony reigns round Woodside.

THE AULD PEAT MOSS.

To langsyne days in balmy June,
Thocht backward flees across
Some forty years, or mair, to muse
Upon the auld peat moss.

Since lichtsome years when life was young,
I've kent baith gain an' loss,
Yet memory keeps wi' kin'ly grip
Peat-time in oor auld moss.

Through fleetin' years the joys o' life
Were whiles gey vain an' boss—
Baith wark an' play were sterlin' coin
Beside oor auld peat moss.

The fun was gran' when freen'ly han's
The harmless clods would toss,
While mony a joke an' lauch gaed roond
Within oor auld peat moss.

Charms linger roond, mair than I'll tell,
But—bend your hearin' close—
Herts hae been been lost, and hae been won
Near-by oor auld peat moss.

Auld freends hae gane, auld times hae changed,
Whaur peats were han'led doss,
Lang grass an' ling are growin' wild
A' roond the auld peat moss.

THE OLD TOLL BAR.

LILT me a lay of long, long ago,
Breathe not of cycle nor motor car ;
Tell of the stage-coach, fast or slow,
That lingered awhile at the old toll bar.

Sing me a song of its varying pace,
'Neath the sun, the moon, or morning star,
Uphill and down in its townward race,
With a stop at the stage and the old toll bar.

Lilt me a lay of long, long ago,
When the engines sped not so fast nor far,
When the carrier's cart, with a dog below,
Oft rumbled along by the old toll bar.

Sing me a song of the droves of sheep,
Their wool besmeared with fragrant tar ;
That were slowly moved from hillsides steep,
And counted with care at the old toll bar.

Sing to me too of the calm long ago,
Of a life with less to fret and mar,
When news of the times from tongues would flow,
And find an exchange at the old toll bar.

Sing to me still of the simpler days,
When nerves knew less of strain and jar,
And travellers chatted of rural ways
Ere hasting away from the old toll bar.

Sing me a song of an ancient day,
When Progress twinkled—a feeble star—
And no one had thought of sweeping away
Such time honoured things as the old toll bar.

* THE WEE THORN BUSH.

O, SPARE my bonnie wee thorn bush,
I couldna bide to see
Its tender twigs and braw green leaves
Grow wan' an' droop an' dee.

Tho' winter wi' his frosty breath
Gars a' its green garb fa',
It feels na then the hopeless blicht
That follows axe an' saw.

* On the roadside above Breich Station.

O, spare my bonnie wee thorn bush—
A gem sae sweet an' rare !
Gang to the wuds whaur trees are rife,
An' look for ane less fair.

My wee thorn bush grows a' alane,
Beside a grassy field ;
An' neath its branches, on a stane,
I aft ha'e kent its bield.

O, spare my bonnie wee thorn bush,
I lo'e its gracefu' form,
When stan'in straucht in cloudless calm
Or bendin' frae a storm.

O, spare my bonnie wee thorn bush,
Sweet memories roond it twine ;
I've watched it aye wi' kindly e'e
Sin' days o' auld lang syne.

O spare, O spare my wee thorn bush,
If ye my thanks wad ken ;
Should ill befa't, then wae is me,
I ken na hoo I'd fen.

THE HIELAN' KNOWE.

BETWEEN the Tinkler's Corner lowne,
An' rugged auld drove loan,
The Knowe fu' green and bonnie lies,
That I oft hae toddled on.

Some freends are near, an' some are far,
While some hae gane to rest,
But noo nae herdin' lad or lass
Step ower the Knowe's roon' crest.

Nae horse nor kye, nor drove o' queys
Are seen near Bentybrae,
A shepherd an' a flock o' sheep
Are a' that noo hold sway.

Gleg were my een, an' licht my feet,
Nae wrinkles seam'd my brow,
When happier than a king I strolled
Beside the Hielan' Knowe.

THE BOURTREE GLADE.

'Tis a summer morning, rosy and fair,
And far from the city my feet have strayed,
To the home of my youth they now repair,
On the braes of Breich, near the bourtree glade.

A rare old artist is coming to-day,
From eastern lands in glory arrayed,
So ere he has passed to the west away,
I'd bask 'neath his smiles in the bourtree glade.

High noon is the hour when his kingship deigns
From his lofty throne, with blue inlaid,
To send his glance o'er hills and plains
Right into the depths of my bourtree glade.

O'er an old ash tree, with crown of green,
The smiles of the artist a bower invade ;
Oh, with leaf and blossom fair is the scene
Within and around that bourtree glade !

The monarch and artist lingers not,
He has much to do in many a shade,
And his presence is welcomed by field and grot,
By moor and meadow, and bourtree glade.

He giveth beauty to fruit and flower,
 He gladdens the hearts of youth and maid,
 And at gloaming sweetly shines on the bower,
 Where they fondly meet in the bourtree glade.

Tho' life has gloom with storm and shower,
 Hard things that make our hearts afraid,
 It still has many a sun-gilt bower,
 And many a sylvan restful glade.



THE QUARRY BY THE BREICH.

*"I ken a hunner water sides
 Shew braver in their pride,
 But they hinna got the glamour
 O' bare Breich Water side."*

SOME folk wha look for beauty spots
 Whiles haud their heids ower heich,
 An' sae they miss calm scenes like this,
 The quarry by the Breich.

The grassy braes, the ripplin' waves
 O' water calm or skeich,
 Wi' bush an' tree, mak' dear to me
 The quarry by the Breich.

E'en on a dull December day,
 When nature's charms are dreich,
 Sweet thochts hae I when passin' by
 The quarry by the Breich.

Ye wha hae love for rural scenes
 Ne'er screive alang ower skeich,
 Wi' kindly e'e tak' tent an' see
 The quarry by the Breich.

THE HILLS.

*"A sweet, ecstatic freedom fills
My breast, while I range o'er my native hills."*

THE open plain, the sylvan shade,
The briery bower, the greenwood glade,
The gentle slope, the little knoll,
The winding lanes where lovers stroll,
The dowie, dowie dens an' lonely glens
Have charms which I feel an' see ;
But I aye lo'e best the high hill's crest—
The hills, the hills for me !

The leafy grove an' the flower gemm'd field,
A deep delight to my heart can yield ;
An' I fondly stray at the close o' day
Through vernal vales an' broomy dales ;
But the sweetest grandeur I'm fain to leave,
On a cloudless dawn to wander free,
By the high hill's crest, that I aye lo'e best—
The hills, the hills for me !

The rich green meadows I proudly hail,
And a woodland scene can ne'er grow stale ;
'Mid buttercups, daisies, or ferny fells,
I gladly roam, yet the heather-bells
Which bloom on the summit o' yon lone peak,
Are dear to me as flowers can be ;
For I aye lo'e best the high hill's crest—
The hills, the hills for me !

My bosom swells and my spirits rise,
As I climb the steep where the plover cries,
An' the whaup's weird notes around me float ;
While all around fair scenes abound,
An' my eyes roam thro' the far-spread view,
'Till they rest on the distant sea ;
Oh, I'll aye lo'e best the high hill's crest—
The hills, the hills for me !

ROSLIN AND HAWTHORNDEN.

My thoughts fly afar from the city,
O'er many an upland and glen,
And rest on a vision of beauty,
By your Roslin and Hawthornden.

How gladly we went from the village,
Where kindness had given us cheer,
And entered with rapture the valley
Where seaward the Esk ripples clear.

So calmly the water meandered
O'er pebbles and rocks in its bed,
While trees in rare grandeur were towering
To cloudlets afar overhead.

Oh ! fairer by far than my fancy
Can picture it now in a song,
Were the vistas of nature's rich splendour
That we joyfully revelled among.

And fair was that day in the summer,
A good gift from Heaven to men,
When so happy we rambled together
By your Roslin and Hawthornden.

THE BRAES AROUND BLACKHILL.

FOR many a busy, circling year
I oft had fondly planned
To come some summer, dawning, here
Where rural charms are grand.

The rising sun, with radiance bright,
Glints o'er each peaceful field,
The birds within the groves unite,
And vocal concord yield.

The Breich from moorland wilds afar
Along the valley flows,
While many a dainty floral star
With sparkling dewdrop glows.

My "Wee broon burnie" from the height
Near grim old Leavenseat,
Winds thro' "The glen of my delight,"
And ripples round my feet.

Old Westburn walls have crumbled now,
Where memories cluster round,
But summer still doth brightly glow
O'er all the sacred ground.

No jarring sound my hearing greets,
The scene is fair and still ;
Oh ! rich and rare are nature's sweets
On braes around Blackhill.

BACKBURN.

WITHIN a peaceful hollow
Near to a moorland wide,
Where grassy fields dip inward
Unto a burnie's side.

An old-time humble farmstead
Stood on a knoll so green,
That nowhere else around it
So fair a sward was seen.

Low were the ancient doorways,
The windows too were small,
Thatched were the roofs so lowly,
Whitewashed each massive wall.

Few were the trees that lifted
Their foliage overhead,
Beside the "wee broon burnie"
That round the dwelling sped.

An old-world fragrant garden
Along the burnside lay,
And precious herbs and flowers
Bloomed there in sweet array.

Within the stackyard border,
A colony of bees,
In summer stored rich treasure
From heath and clover leas.

Around the homely dwelling
 Man worked and children played,
 And still at dawn and twilight
 The pious father prayed.

.

A mass of bare walls crumbling,
 With stream and grassy lea,
 Is all of that fair picture
 That now is left to me.

STARRYSHAW BURN.

FRAE the lanely moors an' mosses,
 Beside the watershed,
 A bonnie wee broon burnie
 Is westward blithely led.

It leaves the dreary moorland
 O' bleak Benhar ahin',
 By Starryshaw it jinks alang
 Wi' cheery splash and din.

Through years beyond a' coontin'
 The burnie's bonnie sang
 Has aye been sweetly soondin'
 While days were short or lang.

My kith an' kin in bygane times
 By that wee burnie stayed ;
 At Starryshaw rejoiced an' toiled
 Through days o' sun or shade.

'Twas maybe they wha planted
 Twa healthy young ash trees,
 That high and wide are wavin' noo
 Wi' every lively breeze.

On early Springtime mornings,
Baith in and oot was steer ;
Whiles times o' pain an' sorrow,
An' whiles sweet blinks o' cheer.

On bonnie simmer gloamings,
They lingered on the green,
Beside the windin' burnie,
Till sparklin' stars were seen.

Langsyne their wark was ended,
They lived, an' lo'ed, an' died ;
Yet onward flows the burnie
Wi' ebb an' flowin' tide.

Through muckle Scathe * it hastens
To Allanton's green glens,
An' mony anither burnie
Its tribute to it sen's.

Though kent as Calder Water
'Mang scenes baith rich an' braw,
It's aye to me maist charmin'
Up by, at Starrryshaw.

THE HILLS OF SHOTTS.

THE rugged, rocky hills of Shotts,
The winding glens and streams,
I've learned to love, and now they find
A place amid my themes.

* Shotts Iron Works.

My thoughts reach back to long ago,
When great grand-sires were young,
And try to trace the pristine charms
Which o'er these uplands hung.

Even if no dancing fairies then
Were sporting here and there,
Nor giants rolled huge boulder stones,
Dame Nature still was fair.

In valleys calm, on hilltops high
The light and shade would fall,
Whiles birds would fly, and beasts would roam
Around and over all.

The rugged, rocky hills of Shotts
Can yield me varied charms,
With pleasure rare I ramble there,
'Mong cottages and farms.

When sunshine gleams o'er holm and height,
With sheen more grand than gold,
Or gilds with glory far-off scenes,
I gaze with joy untold.

When with fierce force the stern storm king
Comes raging from the west,
There's tempest in the vale below,
And on the lofty crest.

When rain, or sleet, or blinding snow
Sweep o'er the moorland track,
'Tis hide or haste before the gale,
There is no turning back.

The rugged, rocky hills of Shotts
Give many a vista grand
Of happy homes and fertile fields,
As well as barren land.

By peaceful glens and steep hillsides
Still many a trace is seen
Of ancient ridge and crumbled walls,
Where farming folks have been.

A glamour of the hoary past
Hangs o'er each shrub and tree,
And greener sward—that plainly tells
Where homesteads used to be.

The rugged, rocky hills of Shotts,
Where Grossart * rambled free,
And noted well both hill and dell,
With loch and stream and tree.

KELVINGROVE.

I SAT beside the Kelvin,
In a calm and lovely dell,
Beneath a spreading beech tree,
While gloaming gently fell.

Grassy slopes and flowery shrubs
Were beautiful and sweet,
And here, from city homes, there come
The crowds with eager feet.

* Historian of the Parish of Shotts.

The happy swallows overhead,
So graceful, swift, and free,
Sailed in their silent majesty
Above the tallest tree.

The river flowed behind me,
With surface glassy smooth,
And all the influence of the scene
My spirit well could soothe.

Fair Kelvingrove has splendid charms,
There nature, helped by art,
Gives pleasure pure, and comfort sure
To many a mind and heart.

The old, the young, the weak, the strong,
The rich, the poor go there,
And oft, on walks and seats, are seen
Fond lovers, many a pair.

Plain men and women, side by side
With fashion's devotees,
Perambulate the winding paths,
And sit beneath the trees.

It is a blessed breathing place,
A place of joy and beauty ;
Come then, ye thousands, gladly come—
Such pleasure is a duty.

Oh for a Burns or Tannahill
To sing the charming scene !
While summer hours and lovely flowers
Begem the braes so green.

Here many gorgeous blossoms
Are blooming bright and gay,
While shrubs and trees their foliage
In varied hue display.

But still my simple Scottish heart
Loves better than them all
The bright wee gowans that so oft
Before the knives must fall.

Flow gently, winding Kelvin,
Thy many charms I love,
And still may hosts of hearts be cheered
By lovely Kelvingrove.

OUT FOR A HOLIDAY.

WE were not a mad-cap holiday crowd
Just out for frolic and fun,
With laughing and jesting long and loud,
And going all day at a run.

We were thoughtfully happy, gladly gay,
And smiling with fond delight,
As we left the city that summer day
To roam on the moorland height.

We thankfully revelled in quiet awhile
'Mid the scenes of long ago ;
We chatted awhile by "the rustic stile,"
Then strolled by "the burnie" slow.

Fondly we viewed the walls roofless and old,*
Of homes where kindred had dwelt,
And gazed on the green sward gemmed with gold
That their feet had often felt.

We climbed the long dark planting's side,
Or sought its welcome shade ;
Then with ecstasy scann'd the upland wide
Where the sportive lambkins played.

There were birds of many a plume and song
All around and overhead,
While fairest wildflowers gleamed among
The heath where our pathway led.

'Twas a splendid time, a glorious scene,
A boon a king might prize ;
The fields far off were a glowing green,
Above were the bright blue skies.

'Twas a day of days, a halcyon day,
When away from restless streets,
We were thoughtfully happy, gladly gay,
Feasting on nature's sweets.

A RAMBLE TO LEADLOCH.

THE April sun had circled round
Ower Longford an' Blawwearie boond,
Past Thirlstane an' Tormie tap,
Grey Leavenseat an' Climpy gap.

* Blackburn, near Woodmuir, where the Author's Grandfather
and other relatives formerly lived.

Ower bleak Benhar an' Muldron moors,
Whaur Winter sen's his snellest sho'ers,
Bricht sunbeams slanted frae the west,
An' touched wi' glory Falla's crest.

Though noo the sun was droopin' low,
Stanebent an' Knowton caught the glow,
Wallhill, Badallan, Tarrydew,
An' Starryshaw shone fair to view.

Near by Braeheid, 'mong budding trees,
I reached a scene o' peacefu' ease—
Leadloch wi' green an' flowery braes,
Whaur even he wha hastes maun gaze.

Withoot, within this muirlan' farm
There's mony a sweetly soothin' charm,
An' gladly there in sun or snaw
Wi' welcome sure a freend may ca'.

SOME LANDMARKS IN THE PARISH OF SHOTTS.

WE'RE gaun as far's the Lily Loch
This lee-lang day in June,
We'll speel the braes abune Shotts-burn
An' sit on Cant Hills' croon.

Roond Kirk o' Shotts we'll dauner slow
An' muse on bygane days,
When glegly Grossart * rambled
Oot ower the glens an' braes.

* Dr Grossart, historian of the Parish of Shotts.

Syne we'll ca' at 'Myres an' Wastfield,
Muirhoose an' Birniehill,
While up by at auld Fortissat *
The view oor een will fill.

We'll see Roughdyke an' Jersay,
Greenhill an' Fernieshaw,
An' Hillhooserig an' Penty,
While mid-day sunbeams fa'.

We'll stap alang by Hills o' Hirst,
The 'Rigs and high Muirheid,
Then kindly keek at Wellesly
As yont the road we speed.

We'll see the Hill an' Blairmakhole,
Knoweheid an Quarryneuk,
An' think o' ither places syne,
While forward we maun look.

Sooth Blair an' Blairmains near the loch
We'll scan while toddlin' on—
Dewshill, Bentfit, an' Papperthills,
Upraised as on a throne.

We'll wastward by Duntilland gang,
An' whiles we'll fondly see
Some faint an' fadin' traces
O' hamestead, bush, an' tree.

By lane Montcow an' Braco Glen
Oor feet will hameward turn,
Doon past Loch-hill and Annies-hill
Ower Tipper-davy burn.

* Fortissat, where in Covenanting times, it is said, a Presbytery of forty sat in council.

There may be brawer places 'tweel
Than thae wild rugged hills,
But aye some glamour lingers
Roond sic moors an' mossy rills.

There's calm the toon can never ken,
There's halesome caller air,
There are whisp'rings in the silence,
That I hear nae ither where.

Far, far awa' there's mony a ane
Wha weel would like to stray,
'Mang kindly friends on Hills o' Shotts,
The green, the grim, the grey.

May peace and joy be in the hearts
O' friends ayont the sea,
Baith here an' there may a' leal folk
In harmony agree.

SUNRISE ON LEAVENSEAT HILL.

OUR eager eyes are eastward turned
To see the sun's first rays ;
Among the purple blooms around
We sit and silent gaze.

The glory of the day-dawn fair
Now charms our eyes and hearts,
We watch each splendid glowing tint,
That silently upstarts.

Ere long the gloom of night recedes,
The spreading light dispels
The deep and lingering shadows
That hang o'er dewy dells.



MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

The hill-tops shine with radiance,
Their outlines dimly seen,
Our eager eyes rejoice to see
The distant slopes of green.

A mist rests in the hollows deep,
While higher ground is clear,
The silence soon is broken now—
What sounds are those we hear?

The bees and birds have waken'd all,
Even cattle, dogs, and sheep
Have shaken off at sunrise hour
The bonds of drowsy sleep.

Soon with effulgence wide and grand,
Ascending to his throne,
The king of day with beaming rays
Gilds all the upland zone.

There's joy, and life, and beauty rare,
Pulsating fresh through all,
Responsive forms of being seen,
The mighty and the small.

The moorlands and the meadows rich,
The bower, the glade, the glen,
All feel the blessed influence
When Sol returns again.

The world is hopefully revived,
And men again renew
Their daily rounds of duties all,
While shines the sparkling dew.

SUNSET ON MULDRON MOOR.

'Tis a sweetly soothing evening hour,
Calm as a happy dream,
And our eyes are gladden'd rarely
By a more than golden gleam,
That flashes over hill and glen,
Lone cot, and rippling rill,
While nature, like a wearied child,
Becomes serenely still.

What pictures on the western sky
Are those which we behold,
With shadows darkly solemn oft,
And light of burnished gold?
'Tis far beyond the power of words
The glory to translate,
In silent reverence we stand
In lowly rapture wait.

The twilight deepens slowly round ;
Hayricks and hedges now
Are faintly seen upon the fields
Though scarce a mile below ;
The peace is deep, and one seems near
To worlds beyond their own,
Though not a face nor form is seen
We seem not here alone.

LARGS. .

DEAR little town that nestles close
'Tween a fringe of leafy trees,
And the shingly beach of a noble firth,
That leads to mighty seas.

A glad and grateful song I owe
To the sea and the scenes around,
For there I wooed sweet health, and there
New strength and gladness found.

Down by the shore when sunshine beams,
'Tis a gay and joyous place,
While along the curving esplanade
Maids trip with winsome grace.

The Broomfield breezes bring a glow
To the town-worn brow and cheek,
O'er land and sea shines beauty fair,
That none in vain may seek.

The steep green hills have wond'rous charms
Where the lonely curlew calls,
Yet the grandest scenes of all to me
Are the glens round Greta Falls.

Oh, hills of Largs, so steep and green,
To you and your Greta Burn,
Your Gogo, your Noddle, and Ailie,
I will oft in dreams return.

I will see your shepherds shear their sheep
On a golden afternoon,
And see at night on the heaving waves
The sheen of the silvery moon.

TO MR FRANCIS ELLIS, LEAVENSEAT.

Author of "Sprigs o' Heather."

FOND minstrel of the moorland wide,
Where winds the Clochrie burn
With many gambols to the Breich—
To you my thoughts return.

Though years have come and gone since first
I knew you wooed the Muse,
My memory doth cherish still
Your song of Tarrydews.

Your "Sprigs o' Heather" from the moors
Around dear Leavenseat,
To me a simple beauty show,
A fragrance that is sweet.

I'm glad that to your bosom came
The charming voice of song,
Which has in tuneful numbers told
Of scenes you dwell among.

All honour to your heart and head,
Still may you blithely sing,
And oft while seasons come and go
May "Sprigs o' Heather" spring.

Though now your outward eyes have lost
Their sparkle and their glow,
To you my friend may Heaven kind
Sweet precious gifts bestow.

Joy, peace, and hope be in your heart,
Your inner eyes still scan
The grandeur of the earth and skies,
The dignity of man.

THE BANKS OF BREICH.

(To W. B. and B. R.)

By the banks of the Breich,
 Since long, long ago,
How many fond lovers have met,
 With smiles on their faces,
 And joy in their hearts,
A joy they could never forget.

By the banks of the Breich,
 This good year of grace,
On carpets of green and of gold,
 Two fond lovers meet
 To speak and to hear
The story that never grows old.

On the banks of the Breich
 They soon will be wed,
While summer is decking the brae,
 Friends all will unite
 In wishing them joy,
A joy that forever will stay.

From the banks of the Breich
 With hope they will go
Far southward where sunshine is bright,
 May their hearts aye be brave,
 While love leads them on
To a lifetime of fadeless delight.

By the banks of the Breich
Old friends will remain,
While summer and winter glide on,
With many kinds thoughts
Of the two youthful hearts
Who afar from the homeland have gone.

By the banks of the Breich,
Again they may meet
And smilingly clasp hand in hand,
Meantime may rich blessings
Of patience and love,
Yield a gladness abiding and grand.

A MEMENTO.

ALMOND banks were fresh and green,
Polkemmet woods were grand,
The Howe-burn haughs as sweet a scene
As any in the land.

Balgornie braes were bright and fair
Beneath the westering sun,
And fain could I have linger'd there
Until the day was done.

The Couch, a sylvan calm retreat,
Gave rest and joy to me ;
At twilight and at dawn how sweet
'Mid fields and woods to be.

May peace and pleasure ever reign
These tranquil scenes throughout,
May love find balm for every pain,
And faith ne'er yield to doubt.

BURNIN' THE HEATHER.

Awa' on the muirlan's on grey spring nichts
The heather is fiercely bleezin',
An' the keen, cauld win' ower the bare hill-sides
Is the red flames brightly heezin'.

Frae a score o' places the fire upsprings,
Aye closer an' closer creepin',
Crackin' an' dancin' wi' wild, weird glee,
Then meets an' gaes merrily sweepin'.

Ower the knowes an' glens it speeds along
In a' its pride an' glory,
Up, up it clim's tae the high hill-tap,
Wi' their stane cairns grey an' hoary.

O there's grandeur rare in the lurid glow
O' the fires o' burnin' heather,
As they rise an' fa, then rise again,
'Maist scorchin' the muir-fowls' feather.

Like the beacon lights o' aulden days
That tell't o' victorious battles,
The burnin' heather a message bears
As it onward roars an' rattles.

It tells o' the conquest Spring has won
Ower Winter grim an' gurlly,
An' its tongues o' flame to a' proclaim
That gane are snaw storms surly.

An' that sune again the muir-birds' nests
Will be rife 'mang tufts an' rushes
That the fire has missed, or beside the burn
That along the lang glen gushes.

An' that ance again 'neath the simmer sun,
When the heather anew is springin',
The young lambs' bleat, and the wild birds' cry
Will blend wi' the laverock's singin'.

A GIFT OF FLOWERS.

THANKS for your gift of sweet, beautiful flowers,
So fragrant, and lovely, and pure ;
Tho' beauty and perfume will fade and decay,
The mem'ry will longer endure.

Fair flowers ! how I love them—the pansies and thyme,
The balm, and the mint, and the roses—
Rare pleasure and gladness I feel when my eye
On rich floral grandeur reposes.

I love them, and prize them, in garden or field,
And where'er in their sweetness they bloom—
On the fair brow of childhood, the bright bridal wreath,
Or as garlands of love at the tomb.

As gifts from the Giver of all, I esteem them,
Sent to sweeten our transient home ;
And while summer's gay moments glide swiftly away,
We find them where ever we roam.

Thanks for your gift of sweet, beautiful flowers,
And kindness linked with the bestowing ;
This life would be purer and sweeter indeed,
If all were such kindnesses showing.

FLIGHTS OF FANCY.

OH, many a flight my fancy takes
To scenes of youth's sweet days,
In silent thought I visit oft
My native moorland braes.

In Spring-time glad I hear the larks,
And see the bonnie braird ;
I look on high to the azure sky,
And down to the gowan swaird.

In summer bright I climb the height
Of my cherished moorland hills,
Afar from throng I list the song
Of heath-hid rippling rills.

In autumn days I fondly gaze
On the purple heather's glow,
Then turn again to the golden grain,
Where the scythes swing to and fro.

'Mid Winter's snow I plaided go
To care for the fleecy flock ;
Oh, many a flight my fancy takes
Away from the din and smoke.

AN UPLAND THAW.

THE SNOW lay deep and sodden
On the open field and moor,
On roadways it was trodden
Hard as a flinty floor.

In the grey of early morning
A gentle rain came down,
And out went the shepherds, scorning
The weather's weeping frown.

When daylight dawned, the blowing
Of wind and rain was strong,
And soon dark clouds were throwing
The liquid streams along.

The mantle of marble coldness
That over the upland's lay,
Dissolved before the boldness
Of rain and wind that day.

Down the hillsides tumbling,
The water rushed with might,
And laughed with glee at crumbling
Snow-banks, once so white.

From every glen and hollow
A big brown stream rolled on,
And there still was more to follow,
Till the deepest wreaths had gone.

There was scarcely a man or maiden
To be seen for miles around,
'Twas a day when each one stayed in,
And work or pastime found.

By the hour of early gloaming
The ground was bare and black,
And the burns in fury foaming
At barriers in their track.

BAADSMILL.

FOND memory oft her flight doth wing
From streets and squares, to the moorland spring
That trickles along, a sparkling rill
'Mid the peaceful scenes around Baadsmill.

Yet better it is in summer gay,
On a hoofless steed to be up and away
From the busy haunts of good and ill
To the upland vistas around Baadsmill.

There is nameless charm in field and wood,
There is bliss in the splendid solitude ;
And a rare repose by glen and hill
On the heath-clad braes around Baadsmill.

Let us go, let us go in the bracing air,
And see a sunrise grand and fair ;
Let us ramble on in that region still,
Till the twilight droops on calm Baadsmill.

Serene and sweet is the whole wide scene,
Until wild winter rages keen ;
Then rain and snow the streamlets fill
On the rugged braes around Baadsmill.

True peace and joy to the dwellers there ;
And still may the hearts of those who fare,
Along that way by glen or hill,
Have memories bright of dear Baadsmill.

VERSES

*For the Social Meeting of West Calder Natives,
25th January, 1884.*

Wi' joy we hail the favour'd nicht
That sees our worthy natives meet,
Frae cot an' clachan, glen an' hicht,
Farm-toon, an' guid auld village street.

They're here—young lassies, sweet an' fair,
An' lads to match them, brave an' braw—
They're here, whase scanty locks o' hair
Are mix'd wi' grey, or white as snaw.

An' men an' women in their prime,
That fill the space 'tween young an' auld,
Are here to spend that happy time,
Wi' bosoms neither dull nor cauld.

Then, first o' a', let's say we're prood
To hae this parish for our hame :
Come, natives ! three cheers, lang an' lood !
For auld Wast Cather's cherish'd name.

Wha dinna lo'e their native place,
Be't mansion big, or muirlan' bare,
Are scant o' gumption and o' grace,
Nae matter whether rich or puir.

But a' met here hae warmer hearts,
An' lo'e richt weel their place o' birth,
While mony freends, in ither parts,
Think fondly o' their native hearth.

Then, when we sing, an' laugh, an' crack,
 Wi' happy, hearty social glee,
 We'll let oor fancies bring freens back
 Frae far awa' ower land an' sea.

Oor absent freends, we wish them weel,
 An' pledge them here, in every airt;
 For fellow-natives a' we feel
 True friendship, though we're far apairt.

Lang may Wast Cather flourish ! says
 Ilk son an' dochter here this nicht;
 Aye may we nobly strive to raise
 Her name an' honour pure an' bricht.

A han' to a' whare'er their e'en
 The blessed licht o' day first saw;
 We're a' "John Tamson's bairns," I ween—
 John's here himsel, kind to us a'.

THE AULD KIRK

(*West Calder.*)

HERE since changeful days of old,
 When grim persecutors bold
 Sought by wrongful cruel ruth
 To immure the springs of Truth,
 There was upon this verdant sod
 An ever-open House of God.

Overlooking field and wood,
 O'er two centuries it stood,
 From the greensward and the "bent"
 In and out the people went
 To hear the blessed gospel sound
 As each Sabbath day came round.

Came with rev'rent step and face
Many a one of ancient race ;
There was still a power to charm
From the cottage and the farm
Eager souls who wish'd to find
Manna for the heart and mind.

Some amongst us yet can tell
How the old-time Sabbath bell
Sounded out from year to year
Unto all who cared to hear,
Saying to the sad or gay—
“Come ye here to praise and pray.”

Roofless now the ruin stands,
Yet the ivy's twining bands
Fain would keep the breath of time
From the crumbling stone and lime ;
Flourish still thou ivy green
A sacred charge is thine I ween.

Faithful plant, we love to see
Thy clinging tendrils sprouting free,
Here where dwellings of the dead
All around are closely spread,
Guard those walls, where faith and love
Rise from earth to heav'n above.

Many in some distant land
Fain would come and silent stand
Recalling forms and faces gone,
Or reading some familiar stone ;
Dearer than any kingly halls
Such hearts would deem those ivied walls.

THE BRAW BRAES O' LINTON
(*Peeblesshire*).

THE braw braes o' Linton,
The charming woods and glens,
Are fairer far than ony,
Wha never saw them kens.

The clear streams o' Linton
Flow freshly frae the hills,
Where bonnie Lyne an' Medwyn
Are fed by rippling rills.

The hichts and howes o' Linton
Where grasses, ferns, an' flowers,
The rowan, pine, an' bourtree
Encircle shady bowers.

The cosy hames o' Linton
Are pleasant sights to see,
When night unfolds her mantle,
And hushed is bird and bee.

The cleanly streets o' Linton,
Wi' a' their oots an' ins,
Are mair than or'nar' handy,
For ane wha zig-zag rins.

May blessings rest on Linton,
And a' her braw green braes,
Her woods, an' glens, an' waters,
In bright or cloudy days.

WILLIAM EWART GLADSTONE.

*(Stanzas suggested by the unveiling of the Gladstone Statue
in Glasgow, 11th October, 1902.)*

WHILE changeful years are fleeting past
Into oblivion's shade,
His is a glory that will last,
His fame can never fade.

We may, or may not, fondly rear
Memorials grand or fair,
A race to come will still revere
His powers and virtues rare.

His was a greatness that was good,
His heart was warm and true,
He wisely planned and nobly stood
With forward reaching view.

To-day our city by the Clyde
Unites with one acclaim,
And cherishes with grateful pride
His honoured, deathless name.

And not alone on Britain's shore
Do men his genius praise,
In many lands the world o'er
His brows are crowned with bays.

GALLANT RESCUE OF A BOY.

(A few weeks ago a young lad, named Thomas Hadden, was rescued from drowning in Cadzow Burn by the singularly courageous conduct of a young woman, named Anne Rankine, who unhesitatingly sprang into the stream—which was fully four feet deep at the place—from a wall upwards of ten feet above the helpless boy's perilous position.—“Hamilton Advertiser,” 2nd August, 1877 or 1878.)

WE hail with pride the warrior band
Who triumph on the battlefield,
And honour all who staunchly stand
Our country's dearest rights to shield.

Altho' the “conquering heroes” come
With weapons stain'd in human blood,
We welcome them with pipe and drum,
And plaudits flow like summer flood.

We would not scorn the soldier's fame
So hardly won on sea and land ;
We proudly praise each gallant name
That's linked with triumph true and grand.

Not less we laud the courage rare
Unrous'd by martial glow or gleam,
Which mov'd a woman's heart to dare
The dangers of a flowing stream.

And not alone, the swollen tide
So grimly rolling, strong and deep,
To stand the drowning boy beside,
She brav'd a perilous downward leap.

And saved him swiftly from the death
Which overhung his youthful heart ;
We read the words with bated breath,
And admiration's feeling start.

Go tell the tale where'er a breast
Throbs for a helpless, perilled one ;
Proclaim the deed from east to west,
'Twill shine as bright as noonday sun.

MY MOTOR CAR.

My motor car is a beauty
The grandest ever seen ;
Even on days that are sunless
It shines with dazzling sheen.

Then, oh, what a lively racer
On level, or incline !
All records it has broken,
My motor, G 99.

Not a speck of dust it raises,
It leaves no smell behind ;
While it glides along as softly
As breath of April wind.

With no dreadful deeds of bloodshed
Is my precious car defiled,
For it even passes gently
A little helpless child.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

Not once has a tyre been punctured
 By smallest thorn or tack ;
 And never have scornful horses
 To drag my motor back.

.

Why is my motor so harmless,
 So swift beyond compare ?
 'Tis a figment of my fancy,
 A "castle in the air."



A PIRNIE PLAID.

WAE's me, wae's me, a pirnie plaid,
 That speaks o' muirlands broon,
 O' mossy burns an' ferny braes,
 Pawned in a dreary toon.

Whaur's noo the hardy shepherd chiel,
 The collie, crook, an' sheep,
 That a' thegither aft were seen
 On heather hills fu' steep ?

The lad wha wore the plaid maybe
 Had left the muirs ahin,
 Forsaken peacefu' heichts and howes
 For city dust an' din.

The snaws o' age had maybe fa'n
 A' ower the owner's pow,
 An' angel-han's had borne him hame
 Whaur nane are frail, I trow.

The plaid, the plaid, it keeked at me
Richt through the stoorie gless ;
A something whispered—"Buy the plaid,"
Ere long my heart said "Yes."

I hae it noo, baith clean an' braw,
I'll hae't through sun an' shade,
An' maybe when the King comes back
I'll wear my pirnie plaid.

GLINTS O' LICHT.

It's noo some fifty years, Joe,
Since first I saw your face,
A kye-herd on the Kepscaith field,
Yon lanely muirlan' place.

We were but happy bairns, Joe,
In life's sweet careless days,
We hadna' left our Eden then
On Cairney's sunny braes.

The years are slippin' by, Joe,
Some thirty-five hae gane,
Since yon clear Candlemas we met
Up near the Thirlstane.

Ye mind yon simmer nicht, Joe,
When Poesy's warm flame
Kept fower o' us awake, Joe,
Wi' little thocht o' hame.

We've aye been toddlin' on, Joe,
Though dreary whiles a wee,
An Eden grander yet will come,
We fain its gates would see.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

There's sorrow, strife, an' stoor, Joe,
 Care gi'es us aft a ca',
 Sma' wonder we are tired whiles,
 An' fain would rest fu' braw.

There's thorns amang oor roses, Joe,
 There's drouth but little dew,
 There's touzlin' win' an' drookin' rain,
 An' yet we aye win through.

We've had oor glints o' licht, Joe,
 Blue skies an' singin' birds ;
 When past an' gane were Babel soonds,
 We've heard some cheery words.

Sae aye we'll patient wait, Joe,
 An rise whene'er we fa' ;
 Some day we'll leave the dust, Joe,
 An' ken the best o' a'.

MUIRMAILIN' BURN

(*In Shotts Parish.*)

BONNIE burnie, weel I lo'e ye,
 Windin' thro' your woody glen,
 Whiles langsyne I've waded thro' ye
 Gaun to see my winsome Jen ;
 Frae the high bare muirs ye wimple,
 Blithesome aye your hamely sang,
 Rowin' on wi' foam an' dimple
 To the dell whaur trees o'erhang.

Chorus—

Bonnie burnie, lauchin' burnie,
 Liltin' aye this glad refrain—
 "Gin ye'll hear me, I will cheer ye,
 Ease your care, an' soothe your pain."

'Neath your bowers at simmer gloamin'
Jen an' I hae joyfu' met,
Syne wi' blissfu' hearts gane roamin'
'Tween the grey brig an' the yett ;
Muirlan' burnie, blithe ye gambol,
Spring aye busks your braes again,
Ither lads an' lasses ramble
Whaur my Jen an' I were fain.

CHORUS.

THINGS O' THE PAST.

HERE an' there roond auld farm-steadin's
Are ancient relics seen,
An' mony a ane that's young an' clever
Aft wonder what they've been.

Whiles a heuk, a flail, a crusie,
Or rusty auld peat spade,
Whisper o' a time that's vanished
An' left them in the shade.

Belyve a spinnin' wheel sair broken,
An' fu' o' wee worm holes,
'Twere better far to lay it quately
Amang the lowin' coals.

Noo an' then an auld stane roller,
An' timmer harrow frames,
Curlin' stanes o' ancient pattern—
Queer things wi' queerer names.

Blocks o' freestane, big an' heavy,
A groove on ilka side,
They squeezed the whey oot sonsy kebbucks
In days o' aulden tide.

MELODIES AND MEMORIES.

Some wi' screw an' frame are stan'in'
 Maist ready yet for wark,
 An' some beside the doorstep lyin'
 That a' their form may mark.

Laid aside for new inventions,
 Or aft that noo nae mair,
 The crud-knife an' the chessart
 Are han'elt there wi' care.

Is't a milestane or a heidstane?
 Losh, mony a funny guess
 Some strangers try when lookin'
 At an oot-o'-date cheese-press.

 A FADELESS GLOW.

THERE was a time, noo lang gane by,
 When I was rich in gude milk kye,
 Wi' horses braw, baith big an' wee,
 An' scores o' sheep on muir an' lea.

They a' thrive weel wi' little cost,
 An' ne'er a ane was stown nor lost;
 Whaure'er I left them a' at nicht
 I got them safe at mornin's licht.

They never kicked nor gored wi' horn,
 Nor brak' the dyke to rive the corn;
 They toddled doucely oot an' in
 Wi' nae stramash nor needless din.

I weized them roond to rest or graze
 On a' the greenest, sunniest braes,
 Nearby some wee clear burnie's brink
 Whaur ilka ane micht freely drink.

Oh, yon were happy days for me,
Wha ne'er had seen the toon nor sea ;
Nae feverish day nor sleepless nicht
E'er cam' my rural bliss to blicht.

.
My horses, kye, an' sheep as weel,
That ower the bonnie knowes would speel,
Were playocks that my youthfu' thocht
Frae bairnhood's wonderland had brocht.

Noo, I hae neither horse nor kye,
Nor sheep on ony muir up-by ;
Though aye I hae a pound to spen',
I'm sure I was far richer then.

Mair precious far than goud or gear
Is happy childhood's wondrous lear,
The magic power that can bestow
On simple things a fadeless glow.

DR. GREGORY.

Good old Doctor Gregory,
I owe you something sugary ;
Many a time I've quickly quaffed
Your bitter medicinal draught,
That oftentimes, I gladly tell,
Has helped to make me sound and well.

Good old Doctor Gregory,
You need not aught that's sugary,
Where health and happiness prevail,
And no poor mortals ever ail,
While still your mixture health doth give,
With sure reward in bliss you live.

NELLIE DOW.

A DAINTY dame was Nellie Dow,
A winsome, witchin' lass indeed,
She fired a score o' hearts like tow,
Syne turned to madness mony a heid.

Nae tinselled queen was Nellie Dow,
Aye modest as the gowan fair ;
Her couthie charms fanned flickerin' lowe,
Till ardent rivals tore their hair.

Calm and discreet was Nellie Dow,
Yet wi' a heart baith leal an' brave,
An' sune the gallant Willie Gow
Was favoured mair than a' the lave.

A waefu' lass was Nellie Dow,
When Willie as a sodger went ;
Yet a' were dancin' daft, I trow,
As hame at length his steps were bent.

The wale o' wives is Nellie Dow,
Her hame but seldom kens a speck ;
An' noo anither Willie Gow
Clasps wee warm han's aroond her neck.

A faithfu' mither's Nellie Dow,
Serene her wifely virtues shine ;
Her twa fond sweethearts' sacred lowe
She wadna' for a kingdom tine.



BENTYBRAE SKETCHES.

INTRODUCTORY.

CHANGED as things are since, say fifty years ago, and busy as we are in these more pushful days, it were foolish to ignore the past. The years of our fathers and grandfathers, in spite of, or perhaps because of, isolation and slowness, formed part of "the good old times," that paved the way for a more rapid and effectual progress now.

Patient, very patient, and persevering were some of the old stock, substantial without being showy, and so long as our communal life has such a sound foundation we need have no great fear regarding future development. Fifty years ago many districts of Scotland were more self-dependent than now. Individuality flourished more freely, and various peculiarities were more piquant and prominent.

The growth of our postal and railway systems, and the spread of education have, with the diffusion of newspapers and magazines, broken down many old barriers of intercourse, and interlinked nearly all districts of the country.

For better or for worse—it is sometimes a little each way—there is more of human friction going on. People are coming into closer contact with many other kinds of people, and the general tendency and result is towards a fuller understanding and a greater polish. This is well ;

still, in the old world were many notable examples of human kind not likely to be reproduced.

Therefore, some sketches of a bygone time may be acceptable to readers whose inclination leads them to con the past. Over seventy years ago, when stage-coaches were running between Glasgow and Edinburgh, the Bentybrae district was, by accounts, very thinly populated.

It is a district of vale and hill, cultivated fields and wide moors. There used to be a goodly number of small farms, with here and there a few cot-houses. Everything was plain and primitive inside and outside of the humble dwellings. There, as many places elsewhere over the country, cattle were frequently used for ploughing, sometimes by themselves and sometimes along with the light horses necessary for moorland localities. The brave hardy farmers of ancient times had to break-in from its wild heathery state ground for crops and pasture. "Riving the bent," this was called, and it was a stiff process for man and beast. For fertilizing purposes, lime was important, and from time immemorial a kiln has existed on that moorland in Bentybrae district.

Previous to the existence of roads, and vehicles with wheels, lime was carried in bags, or creels, on horseback. Moreover, when a young farmer of thirty or forty years of age—they did not often rush into wedlock early then—went to bring home a wife, a strong sure-footed horse was employed to carry on its back both bridegroom and bride.

From friends around an unfailing warning to the new-made wife was to hold firmly and closely to her gudeman while the rough journey from her father's house was in progress. It used to be related that on one occasion when a swollen burn had to be crossed, the horse stumbled in mid-stream, and the happy couple, clinging to each other, went into cold water together, but were speedily rescued to

the accompaniment of much laughter and good-natured joking by the wedding party.

When leal David Tod, of Bentybrae, had resolved to take a young and charming maiden as his life partner, an old uncle brought him a present. "It's no big nor gran', Davie," said Saunders, "but it's an unco usefu' ane." And what think ye was the present? Two good heather besoms, carefully made by the industrious hands of the giver. Truly many modern wedding presents are more costly and much less useful. Doubtless the goodwill far outmeasured the value of the besoms bestowed by canny Sandy Tod. Earthen floors were then common, and for sweeping purposes a good heather birch or broom besom was imperative. Broom was also freely used for killing vermin on sheep. In other cases a free application of Archangel tar was used, the former process being termed "pouring" and the latter "smearing," the wool in each case being parted before the application of the ingredients.

Much that was quaint and amusing cannot be recalled, but a few humorous incidents may be rehearsed.

In connection with one of the churches in Steeprig village was a beadle or minister's man, who, when opportunity offered, magnified his office, even to an undue extent. Yet it is only justice to state that this worthy considered the minister nearly equal to himself in importance. One Saturday night a heavy snow storm came down, and when a few church-goers assembled for public worship on Sabbath forenoon, the beadle was quite alert. Some one asked him, "Hoo got ye oot at yer ain door this mornin'; I see the feck o' the doors hae been drifted up wi' the snaw?" Here was the opportunity of a life-time for the shrewd minister's man, and he answered at once, "Ye hae read in yer Bible, nae doot, that the rain fa's on the just an' the unjust. Hooever that may be, it's easy seen whaur the snaw

gangs, for in a' Steeprig this mornin' every door was drifted up *save the minister's an' my ain.*"

In those days it was customary, and still is to some extent, for church-goers to walk many miles to "sit under" their favourite minister, or to continue meeting with kent folk in the church endeared to them by old associations. In summer many of those who came over outlying fields and moors advanced barefooted, and at some clear little stream washed their feet, put on stockings and shoes, and with calm faces and modest mien, mingled with those going into the sacred edifice.

Dogs were frequently seen at church along with their owners—shepherds and others—and sometimes a little disquiet was produced by the howling of a dog when the congregation united in singing. Contrary to what is the custom now, sitting during the singing and standing while the minister led in prayer were the prevailing postures. Long sermons—sometimes two in the course of once service—were, to young people at least, a weariness of flesh and spirit; but some of the grown-up folk, who came long distances, and could not be present quite regularly, thought there was some economy or propriety in having a lengthy solid service when they had the opportunity.

The ministers visited somewhat freely then, and on stated occasions held a "catechising." In other words, every inmate of the household was expected to be present, and able to answer any question from The Shorter Catechism that might happen to be asked by the spiritual shepherd. This, as may be surmised, was sometimes a much-dreaded ordeal, especially if there was a stern manner along with the black coat. Sometimes, of course, the minister was very genial. It used to be told that a kind housewife brought out bread and butter to entertain the minister, and for want of a knife she commenced to spread

the butter with her thumbs, as was a homely custom in olden days. At once the good man protested, saying, "No, no, Mrs Grey, I never could eat thoomed butter a' my days." The gude-wife was rather put out, and said by way of excuse, "I had ance a knife, but its gane oot o' sicht ; jist tak' this spune, if ye please, an' help yersel'."

On another occasion a minister, out on a long journey, called at a shop for some bread and a pennyworth of cheese. The youth in charge said he could not sell so small a quantity. Promptly he was asked what was the smallest amount he could sell, and when he said twopence-worth, the minister asked him to proceed. When weighed and laid before him by the youth, the minister asked for the knife, and as equally as possible cut the quantity in two pieces, saying, "You will know now how to sell a penny-worth of cheese," and paying what was due went on his way.

About the farm-houses long ago there was, of necessity, a strict practice of economy in almost every respect, but a mild shock was given on one occasion when the minister was being refreshed. Skim milk cheese and butter were set out with bread and milk.

To the surprise of the housewife the minister buttered both bread and cheese, and when he was told that it was an unheard-of thing for any one to spread butter on cheese, he calmly and smilingly answered, "Do not be offended, I beseech you, I was merely restoring to the cheese what had been unjustly taken from it, and now it is excellent."

Sowens, as an article of food, was a good deal used, being made from the coarser particles of oatmeal, which were returned to farmers by millers, along with their "melder" or milling of meal.

Pease scones, barley bannocks, and oat cakes were, with porridge and potatoes, important parts of the daily fare. Home-made candles from the tallow of sheep and

cattle were in constant use. Home dyeing, too, with log-wood bark, was engaged in, while the teasing, heckling, carding, and spinning of home-grown lint and wool were industriously practised. Straw collars and halters for horses, and straw ropes for binding cattle, were made in spare hours by the cosy fire of peats, surmounted by a quaint-looking oil lamp, called a *cruisie*, for lighting purposes. There was frequently an opening in the roof to allow the smoke to get out, and, generally, windows were small. The tambour frame, on which some very fine hand-wrought flowering was done, was a feature of many a humble home, and as a rule our grandparents were very frugal and diligent, leaving in many respects a worthy example to their successors.

DAVID TOD,

OF BENTYBRAE FARM.

THE homestead was pleasantly situated near Drumley Water. In the quiet open garden at the back in summer a profusion of white and red roses bloomed, the beech trees near the dwelling put forth their wealth of glossy green leaves, and in due time the *bour-trees* donned their crown of creamy blossom. The bosky braes by the burnside were gay with foliage and flower, and sweet it was in the evening or morning hours to listen to the feathered songsters piping their woodnotes wild.

To this home David Tod brought his bride shortly after his settlement therein. They loved each other well, and worked harmoniously in the upbringing of a numerous family. Their case indeed might be taken as a good

illustration of how the union of hearts with full faith in each other divides sorrows and doubles joys.

Most of the earlier children had to get along with little schooling, yet they grew up to be intelligent and well-informed. They herded cattle and sheep, and in every possible way helped their parents. There was not much time for the young folks to romp about or play together at any set games, but, happily, it is hard to put an old head on young shoulders, and so the young Tods were not without a good share of youthful joys.

How David and his worthy partner planned and toiled and pinched and saved to make ends meet may never be fully known in any earthly record; but amid all their difficulties and hardships, through cold summers, wet harvests, or loss of cattle, they held on courageously, and always succeeded in paying twenty shillings in the pound. "To owe no man anything," was a religious principle to which they strictly adhered.

In the course of those years the knowes of Bentybrae became smoother, greener, and grassier; fields were drained and fences were put up; and out of such improvements, largely, if not wholly, due to his good tenant, the landlord made capital in the shape of higher rental. Small wonder that in many parts of the country there are large tracts of arable land yearly becoming wilder, and, in short, returning to their former heathery condition.

One severe trial that came to Bentybrae was the rinderpest or cattle plague, and it came in its might. First one and then another of the younger cattle sickened, lingered, and died, till in about two weeks only three of the stock of over thirty fresh cows and young cattle were left. Different people tried to account for the scourge, in different ways, of course. Tracts and articles were written and sermons preached on the impressive, all-absorbing theme. Some there were who said little and thought

much ; and in this number was included douce David Tod. In his prayer at family worship there could easily be discerned an intensity of feeling and a fervour of supplication which proved his faith in a Heavenly Power that either causes or permits such things to be. He used to remark at that time of disaster, "We may be thankfu' the plague didna come ben the trance door ; we maun be thankfu' we've aye oor meat an' claes." With him the twenty-third psalm was a reality ; and there was a verse in another psalm in which he had firm faith, "I have been young and now I am old, yet have I not seen the righteous forsaken nor his seed begging bread."

The monetary loss caused by the plague was something like three hundred pounds. In consideration of this the landlord agreed to forego a half-year's rent, and by one kindness and another David Tod was encouraged to renew his stock of cattle. In a year or two the old farmer was constrained to say, "The kindness o' Providence is maist surprisin' ; little did I think that ever again there would be on Bentybrae as mony nowt as we ha'e already."

The parent pair at Bentybrae never allowed their hard struggles and slow progress to sour or embitter their spirits. You would have searched long to find a more genial or friendly man than old David, with his honest-looking, time-wrinkled Scottish face and silvery hair. He had, moreover, a temperament of an equable buoyant nature, and a keen sense of humour. His wife probably took the sharp things of life a little more seriously, and was not possessed of such a calm well-balanced mind. Still, she did not unduly brood over stern experiences, so that even when her hard-wrought frame was sorely bent by much of this world's stress, and a bronchial attack which became chronic, she too had a thankful heart, and could smile and laugh upon occasion.

David did not speak much on religious matters, but

often his actions were eloquent. When the turnips were being carted home he willingly responded to the neighbouring children's request for one by throwing freely a good many from his load. As showing his quiet humour it may be told that on one occasion with one of his sons he was in a field for a cart of turnips, which were being taken home with the shaws or tops attached. David and his son, each provided with a knife, pulled the turnips, cut off the roots or tails, and threw them into the cart. After a little while, the son seeing his father try to sharpen his knife on the iron-shod cart wheel, asked, "Will that make the knife sharp?" His father's answer, with a twinkle in his eye, indicative of his opinion of his knife, was, "Ha'e ye no read in yer Bible that 'iron sharpeneth iron?'" No more questions were asked, but long years afterwards did the young man relate the incident, adding that at the time he failed to appreciate his father's pleasantry to the full.

While not a little of light and shade had been in the lot of the family at Bentybrae, during the many years of their history the sad shadow of death never entered their home in a positively direct manner. Indeed, the most striking thing we have to say of Bentybrae is the fact that no one living can tell that ever the dark angel paid an actual visit within its walls until very recently. But, alas! in later years a tall and active son, who had been out helping to do some of the world's work, met an untimely end, and his cold clay was brought to the best room in Bentybrae, there to await interment. This was a sorrowful ordeal for father, mother, brothers, and sisters. It was the first break in the family chain, and it came without the slightest warning. Only those who have come through a similar trial can estimate its severity. Until then, the family had, so to speak, found the streams shallow, but now they were called to pass through deep waters. Thus, by a slightly

circuitous road, did the rider on the pale horse arrive at Bentybrae.

Time and divine grace are at once the gentlest and best of soothers and healers when the heart is pierced, and happy are they who do not rebel under such discipline. To them life assumes a deeper significance, and they learn truly that "it is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die."

Years followed years, and, latterly, all of the young folks who were born and grew to manhood and womanhood in that rural home found new homes, some near and some far. The force of circumstances prevented the retention of Bentybrae, and David Tod and his wife, after a few quiet years in a Steeprig cottage, where they were cared for by one of their daughters, passed to that land where no one says, "I am weary," where no sickness enters, and where no loss is known. Brave hearts! you were rich in many respects, with all your lack of gear and gold. Your willing hands were a testimony to your fidelity to duty.

The following tender and true verses from a friend are appropriate here :—

BENTYBRAE.

AMID St Mungo's toil and din
My lot in life is cast,
An' battlin' wi' the warl' at times
I feel a wee harassed.
But aften as the kirk bells chime
A tune o' childhood's day,
My thochts take wing and like a doo
Flee back to Bentybrae.

Then, oh, what joy to view ance mair,
Though but by fancy's aid,
My youth's sweet hame an' ilka tree
That decks that rural shade.
To hear again the peesweep's cry,
The burnie's silver lay,
The laverock's glories to the skies,
That smile on Bentybrae.

'Twas there, while strayin' thro' the field,
Lit up wi' hairst-mune glory,
That starry poesy appeared
And threw her glamourie o'er me ;
And there I met the angel heart
That blest me mony a day,
Oh, need ye wonder that I lo'e
The name o' Bentybrae.

Fu' mony a year when "fair" time cam'
An' pleasure said to toil,
"Oh, free your bairns an' let them ha'e
A blinkin' o' my smile."
When croods a' flocked in haste to view
The charms o' Rothesay bay,
I hied me wi' a lichtsme heart
To dear auld Bentybrae.

For there the auld folk passed in rest
The year's o' life's decline,
Baith weak an' frail they couldna toil
As in the days langsyne.
Yet was their e'enin' made fu' bricht
Wi' mony a gowden ray
O' comfort frae the grand auld Book
Aft read at Bentybrae.

But noo strange voices greet my ear,
The auld folk are awa' ;
And as they bore their crosses here,
E'en sae we bide oor ca'.
"Oh, whaur a grave is gi'en to us
It matters not," some say,
Yet still, I'd like when nicht comes on
To sleep near Bentybrae.

Shotts.

A. S.

BOB MAGEE.

THE "short and simple annals" of the humblest and obscurest of men and women are interesting to the thoughtful observer of human nature. Moreover, a humanising influence comes to all but the hardest of hearts from a study of our fellow-beings. Bob Magee, as the writer first knew him, was an industrious day labourer with various small farmers in the Bentybrae district. He was thatcher, drainer, ditcher, harvest-man, and almost a "jack of all trades." If not always quite expert, he was willing ; if slow, he was sure. A native of the Green Isle, not a little of the particular humour and accent of his fatherland remained with him so long as he lived. Though now well advanced in years, and having a daughter married and away from him, Bob must have been a gay young man in his day. On rare occasions he used to show off to the wondering eyes of herd boys and girls a resplendent vest, that, in far bygone years, had adorned his manly bosom. With much tenderness in his voice, Bob would say, "Troth, an' I was a bright young fellow when I wore that." He was now a lonely widower, and one may

imagine that memories of "love's young dream" had been re-awakened. With a half broken voice and moisture in his eyes, old Bob almost reverently laid away in its place his gay vest, a relic of other days, saying, more to himself than to his youthful listeners, "Don't be repinin' now, sure ye can't help growin' ould, can yez? Ye had yer own day, sure."

Being possessed of a share of vanity, Bob had seen with pleasure the admiration shown in the eyes of his onlookers, and so felt rewarded for his display. It is questionable if he would have liked to go through the ordeal of gazing at his treasured memento of happier times alone. Perhaps his courage rose when he had company who would along with him admire without troublesome questioning.

For many years the rather short, broad form of Bob Magee was familiar to dwellers for a few miles along each side of Drumley Water. Though not very free with strangers, his kind heart and genial manner caused him to be liked by those better acquainted with him. When his work went well with him Bob was genial and cheerful, but, as often happens, there was a flaw in the amber, and when matters went contrary he was gruff and sour. Sometimes when told of a better way to do something, he would begin thus, "Sure it would vex the soul av a saint, so it would." Bob would grumble on, at the same time looking very like an ordinary mournful mortal. Sometimes he had ideas of his own (Who has not?) as to how certain kinds of work should be done. When this did not square with his employer's plans, and Bob was told so, he would break out, "Begorra! do yez think I know nothin'? Man alive, I've digged as much ground as would make the biggest farm in the parish, in troth I have." Bob's tantrums were short-lived, but again and again his old weakness of being easily offended broke out anew.

While he was by no means an unhappy being generally, to see Bob at his best one had to see him at home. That surely says something in compliment of the hard-working old man. Some people are saints when away and miserable sinners when under the domestic roof-tree. Bob's home was a little thick-walled thatch-roofed apartment that had formerly been a "best room" in the dwelling house of a disused farm steading once known as Burnside. The surroundings were calm and soothing when nature was quiescent—some grassy braes, a rippling moorland burn, fringed at this part of its winding course by a few straggling rowan, beech, and fir trees, formerly guardians of the farmstead in its palmy days of long ago. Doubtless, boys at play had climbed those trees to see the nests therein, but now all was changed, sadly changed. In the cosy little house of Bob Magee there was no human companionship, yet it was tidy as if presided over by a thrifty housewife. He had been a widower for many years, yet he worked on, doing for himself to a great extent, and to his credit, be it said, never once grumbling at his lonely lot. Two kind neighbours living near, the maiden sisters, Annie and Jeanie Tod, made things more pleasant and comfortable for Bob against his home-coming, wearied with his day's labour away on the other side of the big knowe that hid Burnside from the banks of the Drumley.

The former sister was almost all gentleness, the latter could be on occasion severe. Bob used to say, "Annie, the darlint! is an angel, but Jeanie is a Tartar." All the while he was grateful to both of them, conducting himself like a gentleman, and they having in him a quiet, obliging neighbour whom they appreciated. After all, the purpose of this sketch and the grand outstanding charm of Bob Magee's modest habitation has not been revealed. No matter how tired or how late he was when returning to his cot, as soon as his door was opened, his eyes rested fondly

on a sight that was dear to him, and had cost not a little of his hard-earned wages to procure. Bob was almost an idol worshipper. In one corner of his home stood a high double-shelved stand whereon was carefully arranged a quantity of china, kept more for ornament than for use. The grimness fled from his face when viewing his stand with its snowy drapery and glittering parti-coloured display of decorative ware. Tenderly, almost reverently, when he had leisure, old Bob would wipe with the softest of cloths those brittle, beautiful articles, until they shone anew. When rallied upon his excessive fondness, he looked astonished, and said, "Why, they're half mate to me." Thus lived the lone old man, his heart going out to his pretty china for lack of a human attraction in shape of wife or child. It may have been that that harmless collection kept him from "eating his heart out" when kith and kin were all gone from him. After the drudgery of the day he had his simple hobby upon which to feast his eyes and thoughts. Doubtless the singularity of the hobby made people wonder. Had Bob been able to read and give his mind to books he might have got greater benefit. As it was, he might easily in his circumstances have done very poorly, and his conduct deserved commendation. Dogs, cats, or canaries were out of the question, seeing he was out all day, and his excessive love of a spotless abode was best advanced without live stock.

Bob was so careful indoors that few breakages occurred. Even when he insisted every Christmas evening in treating Annie and Jeanie Tod to tea in his treasured china no mishap befel a single piece, for the kind, old fashioned ladies were careful in themselves, and respected Bob Magee's affection for his cherished china. Those three, and many others who knew them, have passed from our sight, but their remembrance remains with those who survive, a pleasing picture. Bob died, the china was dis-

persed, the stand cut in two. His old home is now roofless, but he is not yet forgotten by all of those who knew him.

CHARLIE ROSS, TRAMP AND ORRAMAN.

WHILE life in the bare uplands, for miles around, helped not a little to develop resource, perseverance, endurance, and such like excellent qualities, the conditions seemed unfavourable to the taking root of aristocracy. That section of humanity kept to the more fertile, sheltered places, a good deal nearer sea level. Therefore the faithful scribe must, from force of circumstances, as well as from choice, in the production of these sketches, write about common people.

Charlie Ross was a besom maker, and almost anything from that up to a mower in haytime and harvest. He could dig, repair fences, and make himself generally useful about a farm or garden. If for exhibition purposes, his handiwork might not always have been honoured in the prize list, yet he was a most useful assistant at busy seasons to the small farmer who could not afford to keep a full staff all the year round. Regarding economy, many of those small farmers could give points to those who work on a larger scale. How often is it thoroughly true that—

“Common things confound the mighty,
From the lowly great things spring.”

Charlie Ross, being a maker of heather scrubbers and besoms, was also more or less of a tramp, and for many years he did not stay long at one place. He was a strongly made, rather unkempt-looking, elderly Scotsman.

What his upbringing and early life had been he never told. He seldom became reminiscent in his talk, beyond

the time he had spent strolling from farm to farm through portions of the counties of Stirling, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, and Lanark. He, like most other wanderers, had his selected places of call, and conservatively adhered to these. Among others, was Bentybrae farm. David Tod and he were often a help to each other, and they got along tolerably well together. Charlie got bed, board, and a small wage, while David got some of his work furthered. Charlie would arrive with a bundle of heather besoms, and sometimes after a few weeks would leave, better fed and clad, with something in his pocket to fall back upon. He was a tramp in some respects, but neither a begging nor a lazy one.

In those days newspapers were scarce, but to the easy-going rural population Charlie, and others who went hither and thither, were nearly as good as the now ubiquitous news correspondent. Seated in winter evenings on the bunk inside the hallan, Charlie would rehearse things which he had seen and heard of in his journeying between Crawfordjohn and Falkirk. Changes of tenants, births, marriages, and deaths, with many items of less or greater interest, were related, the while stockings were being knitted, and boots or harness repaired, by various members of the fireside circle. That was all very good for the sober, worldly wise seniors, and Charlie loved to talk when he had good listeners.

He could, however, do more than talk, and for the younger ones around the wide old hearth the gay time came when Charlie brought from a deep inside pocket a tin whistle. There was silence at once, and while one after another of the fine old Scottish tunes were played, a close and delighted attention was given to the rugged minstrel. Who knows but what he enjoyed those peaceful, pleasant evening hours even more than the happy family? Possibly there was a seldom-satisfied hunger in his heart that his

young listeners never dreamed of. For the entertainment of the children Charlie also did a little in the way of singing. It was amusing, if not charming. He could also tell some droll stories of people and places he had known while going around. He knew, of course, many moors, and what kind of heather these could supply. He also could tell not a little about the nature and habits of the wild fowl and animals which frequented such solitary districts. Need it be wondered that to youngsters who had never been away from home he was a connecting link with a larger world outside their own limited radius ! The high ridges which ran along either side of the Drumley valley seemed to these Bentybrae infants to shut in a space quite big enough for a world, according to their modest ideas.

One thing Charlie Ross had no wish to try was ploughing. Indeed, he did not care much for the handling of horses. Give him a good spade to delve the kailyard, or a peat spade with which to cast peats in the moss, and he felt more in his element. Probably few working men ever forget when the Day of Rest comes round. Charlie once forgot. It was a spring morning, and he was getting ground ready for cabbage plants. He had arisen from sleep thinking he was unduly late, and hastening out with spade in hand, said something to that effect. Being told it was Sabbath morning, he turned instantly, looking as if guilty of a serious offence.

He was fond of reading, and took an interest in what went on in other parts of the world.

As a working companion, he was very agreeable and intelligent, though sometimes doing his work in a rather slipshod manner. During the Franco-German war in 1870 the author and he were mowing hay together, and Charlie showed such a keen interest in that dread campaign, that it was the main topic of conversation day after day. Evening papers were then in their earliest infancy so

far as Bentybrae was concerned, but in some way or other Charlie got one, and talked of the war more than ever. In this connection it may be stated that, according to local gossip, Charlie Ross had formerly been a soldier, who, for some unknown reason, had taken French leave of the army, and changed his name. This might be true, or it may only serve to show that when an appearance of mystery seems to enwrap anyone, even a besom-maker, some one will suggest an explanation, and a rumour is born. Ross was a robust, hardy man, and told that he had never had toothache nor headache. He was not at all times an abstainer, but as a rule he was exemplary and steady. Now and again, after a time of settled work with a farmer, the moving fret would seize him, and off he went to other scenes and other occupations. Even after David Tod had, through advancing years, retired, Charlie was going about, but how he fared in his declining years history showeth not. It might just be stated that for a few years he gave up the wandering life, and lived in a small house near the high moorland, at one end of the Bentybrae farm, but this too came to an end. The wander-thirst asserted itself, and once again Charlie went on tramp.

THE OLD DOMINIE.

WHAT changes and improvements there have been in educational methods since the introduction of the present system thirty-six years ago. There have been needful and noteworthy advances in many respects. Generally, "the greater good to the greater number" has been the outcome of the School Board arrangements. Nevertheless, the older system served its time remarkably well in many ways, and is entitled to a kindly remembrance. Scotland

stood well in educational matters fifty years ago, and the teachers of to-day will not grudge a meed of sympathy and praise to their predecessors in the earlier part of last century.

Some interest could be aroused and some amusement caused by making comparisons between modern teachers and those who, with scant and uncertain reward, "taught the young idea" long ago. Dress, manners, and methods might be contrasted, but that is not the aim in this sketch, and, as the author is an ardent lover of peace, the risk of bringing "a hornet's nest about his ears" will not be indulged in.

Thirty-six years ago the system of instruction in many outlying places was variable and elastic in the extreme. Going back ten or twenty years further it is a matter of history that it was even more simple and primitive. All, except the more youthful, will have heard or read of rural scholars now and again carrying to school a quantity of peat fuel, that a fire might be kept up without lessening the schoolmaster's slender enough income. It may also be remembered that the "wages" paid for teaching were a rather heavy item for a breadwinner with several children and a very modest rate of pay. In this connection an ancient anecdote might be re-told.

One Monday morning a schoolboy was doing some service for his mother, and was late for school. With a month's fees in one hand he faced the angry "maister," who at once resolved to punish the boy. "Hold our your hand," was the stern request, while the tawse were menacingly displayed. The trembling urchin, probably without thinking what he was doing, held out his right hand in which was tightly clasped the precious money. "What's in your hand?" demanded the teacher. "The wages," whimpered the boy in reply. "Come here, let me see,"

said the dominie. The money was counted, put into his pocket, and the man's mood was changed. Gently he asked why the boy was late, and was promptly told. The response was, "You're a good boy, always help your mother, run to your seat, and go on with your lessons." It is to be hoped that pay day pardon for offences against school discipline did not bring about any conspiracy to defeat the ends of justice.

Come we now to Bentybrae. That locality had for a very long stretch of years been more or less a centre of "light and leading," so far as schools and churches were concerned. Meantime a sketch of Dominie Crookman, who for several years was a schoolmaster in close proximity, will be attempted. Before his arrival, an interval when there was no school within easy distance for the younger scholars had occurred.

Why Mr Crookman had left his previous appointment, where he came from, or why he chose our hilly moorland district, were interesting points never generally known, though causing much speculation. He just seemed to have floated into our little community "like a knotless thread," as more than one remarked regarding him. The reasons for his discreet reticence afterwards became more apparent.

In a little apologetic apartment at one end of a miner's row on Blinkie-hill the old dominie first installed himself. From that outlook on Drumley Water district, where population was scanty, he sometime afterwards gravitated to quite near Bentybrae, where he had rented a single apartment house from David Tod. Opening straight in from the outer door, and directly behind the two bed spaces in the house, was a large closet. The Dominie had come nearer the centre of our quiet little world, and having now a house of his own *and a hen*, thought himself well established, and chuckled accordingly. Unfortunately the solitary biped living under the same roof had little cause to cackle or

chuckle. Most of his former pupils, and a number of new ones, very soon gathered daily around the Dominie, while by voice and strap he inculcated instruction and maintained order. When among his pupils, the Dominie wore a wonderfully smart, close-fitting jacket, and one soon saw that it was improvised, having been a coat from which the skirts had been completely cut off. Between a finger and thumb of one hand was usually to be seen, to assist his eyesight, a single spectacle eye, guileless of rim or any attachment. It was doubtless, like himself, and his whole make-up, a relic of other and better days, for poor Dominie Crookman was sadly down-at-the-heels and out-at-the-elbows. To give a fuller description, he was over sixty years of age, and he was light of foot as a tailor of thirty. This was perhaps contributed to by his wearing of light rubber or "gutty" slippers.

In his walks abroad the dominie generally "scliffed" along—he did not skip—at a rapid "Paddy's trot" rate of speed. In his trousers he was decidedly singular and "kenspeckle," these garments being of white canvas, duck, or some such material. In his spare time on Saturdays or Sundays, the versatile old man was fairly equal to the laundry work required in maintaining that cleanliness which ranks high among the virtues. However, by the way, it should be told that his bedroom-kitchen-parlour-schoolroom premises were not by any means a health resort. Dominie Crookman's overcoat was conspicuous as well as his trousers. It had been black. It was large, and covered many defects in his under apparel, which was well. Surmounting his rather pale, flabby face and his silvery hair, was a battered weather-worn dress hat, while a kind of completeness was given to his rig-out by the firmly-held remains of an umbrella. His mouth showed lack of firmness, and it was only occasionally that one could get little glimpses of the gentleman he had been. He was amusing, and he was pathetic; like

Goldsmith's Schoolmaster, he could talk "in words of learned length and thundering sound," but really he got small opportunity, for the rustic dwellers around spoke in a simple manner, and seldom went higher or deeper on any subject than their understanding warranted.

"The Dominie," as he was mostly called, having been highly educated, and, as has been indicated, being possessed of a lingering amount of dignity, was accorded a considerable share of respect by the homely people among whom he for a few years resided. David Tod, among others, always addressed him as "Mr Crookman," and, like other farmers around Bentybrae, occasionally employed the man of figures and fractions to do measurements in connection with draining and harvesting contracts. He was a sad, though not uncommon mixture, was the old dominie. In him there was an unholy blending of dissipation, dignity, and destitution.

He had, through his love of strong drink, fallen from his high estate as a capable and respectable instructor of the young, and was in his old age paying a heavy penalty. While there was a good deal about the man and his ways to make onlookers smile, even the superficial spectators could see that his lot was a pitiable one.

He seemed to be a worse friend to himself than he was to neighbours or fellowmen. He did not, like many others who have wasted good opportunities, become a rogue and vagabond. While he had sinned grievously against his own higher interests, himself was the chief sufferer, for, like many who fail, he did not turn round as beggar, imposter, or defrauder of others. Without audible complaint, he kept his life record to himself. Somewhat irritable he certainly was, when careless, mischievous boys or youths aggravated him. Sam Witson, who lived next door, was so unruly that he was expelled in disgrace, and afterwards sought mean revenge. One day, stealthily opening the doors leading into the closet, or hen prison, he liberated

the lonely creature. Daylight and freedom, with a more varied and natural food supply, might have been good for the hen and its owner, but as the latter had more fear than faith regarding his neighbours and his live stock, the liberation sorely distressed him. Calling his scholars to the rescue, a cordon of boys and girls, eager for any excitement, soon surrounded the fluttering mass of feathers, and the dingy closet was again a prison. Small wonder Dominie Crookman had a meagre supply of fresh-laid eggs. As for Sam, he had run so fast and far that no one could overtake him. There was another occasion when Sam caused a disturbance. With a large piece of stone in his hands he rubbed or rattled along the outside of the School-house gable. The dominie was exasperated, yet cool, and held a council of war. The outcome was that four of the swiftest, strongest boys were deputed to rush out and capture the tricky Sam. After a hard chase, and not a little schoolboy stratagem, Sam's adroitness was circumvented, and he lay on his back with four boys holding on by his four limbs. "Bring him here," shouted the dominie, his right hand itching to inflict summary punishment on his tormentor. The procession started; Sam was still and quiet, and seemed to be resigned to his fate. He had only been resting and planning, for when within ten yards of the dominie and his cane, Sam, with a sudden and violent movement of his four limbs, at once prostrated his four captors, and bounded off free. The crestfallen four, with the chagrined dominie, returned to their work in the school.

Evening classes in the winter season were conducted by this Bentybrae dominie, and to studious young men he unbosomed himself more freely than to any others.

Perhaps in these youths, at the dawn of manhood, he saw a vision of what he once had been. Dominie Crookman and his pupils had at least one bright, easy day

every year. He was not old enough, nor hardened enough to encourage cock-fighting, as some did in the "bad old times," but on "Auld Handsel Monday" the dominie held high festival with his scholars, all in best attire. He prepared himself with oranges and other dainties to give to them. What was more important from his point of view, and for the supply of his physical wants, was also attended to as follows. Beforehand all and sundry were duly invited to bring gifts, in accordance with old custom, to the schoolmaster. Moreover, it was then as it often is now, those who gave most were awarded the highest honours.

The boy and girl whose presents (in money) were highest were for the time being to be king and queen among their schoolmates. On such occasions the dominie was genial, and the scholars were happy. In course of time "the knotless thread" process was repeated. The dominie could not have become independent, but he had quietly departed from Bentybrae, leaving no trace behind.

DOCTOR MACWEALE.

SOME years ago a medical doctor from over the "Borders" settled for a time in a little rural village only a few miles from the Drumley Water braes. What his abilities in the noble art of curing and healing were, history sayeth not. But there came a day when pills and potions were transferred to another locality far distant. A native of the new region interviewed the doctor regarding his withdrawal from the vicinity of Bentybrae, and remarked that he thought a doctor was needed in that wide district. The prompt and emphatic response was, "A doctor, a doctor, did you say? Why, upon my soul and conscience, there is no scarcity of

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doctors in that starvation part of the world!" The canny native was taken aback, but added, "I really thocht ye had only auld Dr Macweale to compete against." The southern doctor replied, "There was Dr Macweale, a host in himself, and besides every old wife in the blessed place had, day and night, summer and winter, dozens of doctors around her door, if not at the front of the house, they were in swarms at the back."

The slow-thinking native, not seeing what the smart professional man meant, pressed for an explanation, and was told that cabbages, curly german greens, medicinal herbs, and such like, were so much in use, both for the preservation of health and for its restoration, that no doctor need hope for a living so long as Dr Macweale was able and willing to do what the vegetables and herbs were not sufficient for. In many parts of Scotland the thrifty, thoughtful peasant class were skilled in the use of many simple remedies. They were in closer touch with Mother Nature than the same class are now. The secrets of healing and curative roots, plants, leaves, and flowers have been largely lost during changes of various kinds that have taken place. In most districts population has increased, and doctors are more plentiful. The penny post, the newspaper, and railways have made many alterations.

Dr Macweale has, in a way, been introduced, but the worthy old medico deserves fuller attention. It must have been a long time since he was young, for even many years ago his wrinkled forehead and cheeks, bronzed and weather-beaten by the suns of many summers and the storms of many winters, made him ancient looking, to young eyes at least.

A frank, genial man was the doctor. Brusque and witty too, quick to gauge human nature, and ever ready with a kind word or humorous reply—sometimes a blending of both qualities. Of medium height and a broad build, he

presented a manly appearance. His looks were such that the younger generation readily gave him credit for possessing a knowledge, skill, and power far beyond what the modest old doctor ever laid claim to. Being medical man for a wide district, he owned a horse and gig. He was gentle with his horse, and took care when visiting likely places to bespeak a feed for it. Whether he owned three horses in succession, or merely varied the name, cannot be guaranteed. Still the doctor has been heard applying to his horse such names as "Thunder," "Gabriel," "Daniel." Perhaps these were only expressions of humour, or meant to impress more deeply the silent, staring children who stood around. Dr Macweale's gig was also a good deal weather-beaten, and had not known the touch of the coach-painter's brush for perhaps twenty years. On the side where the doctor sat the springs had been strained to such an extent that it had a chronic uneven look, whether he was inside or not. One used to wonder why it did not occur to the doctor to sit week about on the right and left sides of his gig, but, of course, not one of these reverential rustics dare make such a bold suggestion to so learned a man. To all the grown-up folk whom he knew, the man of physic had a cheery word as he went along.

One particular day he and David Tod, in the course of their respective duties, had met on the public road several times. Finally the doctor spoke thus, "David, we are meeting each other often to-day. I hope we will meet in heaven at last." Douce David piously responded in all seriousness, "I hope so, doctor." Those two were always frank and friendly towards each other, and when opportunity offered they had little talks together.

A sociable man was Dr Macweale, yet he always had himself in restraint, the duties of his important profession being looked upon as a high trust which he dare not neglect. Sometimes, of course, he was out of patience

with some of those folks who think themselves ill, or those who, through public works, pay a few pence each week, and wish to get, if possible, something for their money, even if they do not urgently need it. On one occasion, a loud-spoken workman's wife, thinking some minor ailment affected her baby, asked the doctor for a powder of a kind, just as he was passing in his gig. The kindly doctor gave her what she asked, with a few instructions thrown in, and these probably were better than medicine had they been more fully regarded. The woman was curious to see the bulk or appearance of the powder, and opened the paper as the doctor drove off. The day was a blowy one, and a gust carried the simple mixture away into the air. The woman shouted, "Doctor, hey doctor, the win' has blawn the poother awa'! What wull I dae?" "Just give the child the paper, it will do quite as well," chuckled the half grim, half smiling old doctor, adding to his horse, "Go on, Thunder." At another time some one had suggested that Dr Macweale had been the means of hastening a patient's departure from the "ills that flesh is heir to." When the suggestion reached the doctor's ears, he emphatically said, "God bless me, its a madman's story; I can make something out of a living man, but nothing out of a dead one." After a silent pause came one of his brief addresses to his faithful horse, "Gabriel, go on, go on, there's patients waiting to be cured, not killed." Often as the doctor jogged along quiet moorland roads he was speaking to himself, or to his four-footed friend. Like most other doctors, he highly recommended temperance, regularity, cleanliness. The latter virtue would be mildly and adroitly enforced in some cases by the doctor insisting on having his patient thoroughly bathed from head to feet with soapy water. Full well the old medicine man knew that—

"Joy, temperance, and repose,
Slam the door on the doctor's nose."

Dr Macweale passed away many years ago. On his tombstone may be seen these Scripture words, "Thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise. . . . the earth shall cast out her dead."

WILLIE ARNOTT.

ON the sun-lying side of Drumley Water, just facing Bentybrae, was Willie Arnott born.

Willie, not knowing much of father or mother, had kind friends in his maternal grandparents, and was with them, while they lived, during all his boyhood years. Their comfortable abode, Greycrags, was all the more cheerful for the presence of the quiet, playful grandson. Without being precocious, Willie often seemed older than his years. Being possessed of a considerable measure of thoughtfulness, he often wondered and questioned about matters that many of his seniors never gave place to in their minds. He was generally "guid o' the uptak," and learned things readily. Therefore, his schooldays, on the whole, and his times of acting as cow-herd brought to him interesting occupation, and numerous pleasant pastimes. Even when quite young he acquired, what some older people miss, the art or faculty of making daily life interesting to himself. Hence it was interesting to others to know him, and his his methods of action. While the average country boy could make, with a pocket knife, such things as water-wheels and windmills, Willie's ingenuity contrived little connections and complications, that showed the deeper mechanical bent of mind which moved him. Some lads could, with wheel, crank, connecting rod, and handle, produce what had much resemblance to an engine; Willie vastly improved on this, and, farmer's boy as he was,

actually made the working model of a steam engine. This, when shown off on winter evenings to a selected few of his chief companions, evoked profound admiration. All the while there was little of self-consciousness or vain-glory about modest Willie Arnott.

While expert and painstaking at school, and afterwards, he was not a paragon, neither did he over-rate himself. In connection with his mechanical efforts it may be told that, like many others, he deliberated on the probability of discovering the secret of perpetual motion, and thought that by applying a succession of magnets to his grandmother's reel he might make it wind the yarn without tiring her arm. He was fond of reading, too, was this young genius, and gave attention to subjects scientific, historical, and romantic. From early boyhood's years onward, he and Robert Tod, of Bentybrae, near neighbours as they were, had much close companionship. Their turn of mind was somewhat alike, and in evening hours they often compared notes, and had some friendly chat, sometimes indoors, at other times by the craggy verge of Drumley Water. Their friends wondered what the two dreamy lads got to say to each other, and sometimes reprimanded them for returning home so late.

There came one glorious summer Saturday morning when the inseparables set out for Auld Reekie. Some happy hours of sight-seeing were experienced with great interest, and then with undiluted joy the country youths hied them out from the din and dust of city life to rural regions. They were going to visit a mutual friend who lived in the peaceful moors around Nine-Mile-Burn.

Such a treat as they had on the Sunday, after being at Church, traversing heath-clad ground and climbing a steep hill! This exhilarating exercise gave them a distant view of their "ain countryside," and they were delighted beyond measure. Two or three years later, on a Sunday afternoon

in August, they had a calmly ecstatic enjoyment. Ascending from Bentybrae on foot, they got into the purple beauty of the moorland, and as higher and higher they rose their happiness increased. At a little spring of cool, clear water a small white flag had been placed for the convenience of the shooters, who were to be there next day. On the fine texture of the snowy flag each pencilled an appropriate verse, and this was Willie Arnott's "first attempt" at rhyme and measure. Both were happier than a king on a throne. While Bob had become a fairly facile versifier, Bill had developed into an entertaining violinist, so the one could give to the other a meed of admiration, and with all sincerity. Willie, as time went on, continued to "lisp in numbers," and vowed that, if possible, he would at least equal his friend Robert. That was after some harder experience of life had come his way. At Greycrags there was much of an even tenor in his existence, but this came to an end.

With calm courage he went out into the world, a willing and capable worker. With Robert Tod he exchanged letters now and again, and sometimes the two sympathetic souls were like fond lads and lasses, "fain to meet and wae to pairt." One bonnie summer evening they met, miles from Bentybrae, and happily forgetful, or blissfully unheeding, they lingered among the green fields and leafy trees until the small hours of morning. On a delightful June dawn they at length forsook, for the dusty roadways leading in opposite directions, the dewy, flowery sward, where friendship's wine had sparkled. Willie and Robert by this time were like David and Jonathan. A modification, though not a change of the regard they had for each other, came about some time afterwards, when Robert Tod became the proud and fond possessor of, first a sweetheart, and then a wife.

The farm life had suited gentle, ingenious Willie Arnott

exceedingly well. There was little of friction with warring elements of humanity on the solitary slopes of Drumley. As opportunity offered or need occurred, he could make and mend many of the various implements, and very heartily his grandfather commended his cleverness. On leaving Greycrags he left farm work, and though he was versatile in likings and ability, there was not so much of variety and charm in his new duties about pits, mines, and public works. Still Willie was a cheerful youth, not easily daunted. Like other reflective, sensitive beings, he had his depressing moods, but a lively faculty of humour relieved his mind before the strain became too intense. He would turn to his cherished violin, and extract consolation or courage. He would, at another time, pen in verse an epistle to his faithful Robert, for which he got in return measure for measure.

Sooner than any one anticipated, all this came to an end. In the beginning of winter a severe cold caught Willie Arnott, and got such a hold of his unrobust chest that a doctor had to be consulted. Instructions and medicine were supplied, and no serious result was dreamed of. At the brief New Year holiday time, a long journey to visit some relatives was undertaken, but the medicine was forgotten, and when Willie returned, his cold was more severe. On that occasion he visited Robert and his wife in their new home. Only a few weeks later he ceased working. Consumption had commenced, and all the skill and comfort available could not avert decay. Still, Willie was patient, and after a time resigned. Many friends, among the number his boyhood's friend, Robert Tod, visited him frequently, until, about the end of May, he calmly ceased to be in this land of the dying. He was a young man of more than average ability and tact, and one who, had he been environed by circumstances somewhat favourable, could have moulded them so that himself, and others through

him, would have been greatly benefited. Still, he served his little time usefully and creditably in the Bentybrae region and elsewhere, and even though he passed from earth while still a young man, who can say his life was incomplete, or that he lived, toiled, and suffered in vain? Some of the so-called broken lives down here may be the fullest and brightest in the higher state of being.

A BRAVE SHEPHERD.

FOR a good many miles along the high moorland ridges southward from Bentybrae there were numerous shepherds. Generally they were men of considerable individuality and force of character. They knew well all matters pertaining to their calling; moreover, their knowledge embraced many matters of general interest gleaned from even a wider range than that upon which their flocks pastured and rested. To put the summing up into a phrase peculiar to the district, "They could see as far into a whinstone as any one could." A shepherd is usually a resourceful man; his somewhat isolated occupation induces thoughtfulness and self-reliance. In the interests of his sheep and his employer, he must frequently take decisive action, without being able to consult any one. Having occasional times of leisure, especially on winter evenings, he is sometimes fond of reading, and in this way acquires much information. Consequently, in his own plain way, he can talk intelligently on many topics. Blunt and unpolished he may often be, yet mostly shrewd and practical.

Sometimes in discussion on deep or knotty subjects he can more than hold his own with masters of arts and theories. It used to be said somewhat disparagingly of a type of

this class of man, "He is a man among sheep, and a sheep among men." Many a one around Drumley Water braes could be pungent and disagreeable at times both in speech and action. Probably the better way is to leave such conduct to its well-merited oblivion. The "sweetness and light" alone is worth cherishing and recalling in after years. So long as there is manliness of heart and thoughtful sincerity of mind, in shepherd or in sovereign, the rest of his make-up is chiefly a matter of veneer, and that is not always important.

Of a worthy shepherd, who was somewhat of a hero in humble life, this sketch will supply a few particulars. Geordie Broon—his name, like most others, was always used in the vernacular—came from a farther-off district when a comparatively young married man. Besides being a good careful shepherd, he became a good helpful neighbour. His wife was an active genial woman, well fitted for the position she occupied. In the course of the year there were a good few "handlings" of sheep and lambs. On these occasions outside assistance had to be got, and dinner, tea, etc., had to be supplied to those who had been engaged at dipping, clipping, and other details of sheep treatment. The shepherd's wife was mistress of ceremonies, and always acquitted herself in a thoroughly satisfactory manner. Geordie was usually rather quiet in a company, but as a rule he knew what he meant to do, and attended to that. His black-faced sheep had a wide extent of rough moorland to feed upon, also a good stretch of arable land that had recently been under cultivation. Every day the hardy shepherd had a goodly number of miles to travel, going over and around the farm of Wester Bentybrae. Sometimes, of course, there was much pleasure in this round of inspection; at other times, when rain or snow was excessive, toil and discomfort was experienced. Marshes and moss-hags had to be examined, out-of-the-way

hollows explored, and a watchful eye directed to every separate group of sheep on the moors. A shepherd pretty soon knows if one of his flock is in a drooping state, or if those autumn pests, the blue flies, have deposited their deadly eggs, which so soon become ravening maggots. It is less pain to find a sheep drowned in a morass than to discover one hiding itself in an obscure corner, while being eaten alive by myriads of maggots. There are other ailments that cause the diligent shepherd anxiety and close attention, so that he must always be reviewing his charge, and shielding them from possible dangers.

Early every morning, summer and winter, Geordie Broon was out and away to the hills where his sheep had been sleeping overnight. Not that he needed to waken the "woolies," but to see if they had all been able to begin their regular fore-day descent to the lower end of their "gang" near Drumley Water. Slowly they went downward, grazing by the way, and usually about the height of the day they headed around, in the same leisurely manner returning to the higher, drier ground where they passed the night. While the author was quite young and inexperienced in weather signs and other things, he heard Geordie tell that his sheep knew well when an afternoon storm was coming. From long observation, he had become aware that the wise, old, black-faced ewes had some faculty that discerned impending weather changes. The proof of the matter was as follows :—Occasionally on a fine-looking day the sheep would unaccountably turn mid-way in their downward progress, and, nibbling as they went, return to their night ground. As a rule the wisdom of their conduct was manifested by a breakdown of the good weather conditions, and the sheep were spared some hours walking under difficulties.

The true shepherd loves his sheep, and studies those things that tend to their comfort, safety, and well-being.

Geordie Broon was a good type of the man who will sacrifice his own ease for the sake of the stock entrusted to his care. Over wide, open drains he laid narrow foot-bridges. At one place he would have the rushes cut to let new tender growth come up in spring. At other places he let rushes grow for sheltering winter foggage.

Trespassers, if they went near enough to disturb ewes or lambs, were talked to very plainly. Should anyone be traversing the moor with a noisy or frisky dog, which frightened his timid flock, then woe betide that dog should it get within the reach of the shepherd's hazel staff. Moreover, should the owner of the offending dog come within hearing range of the leal guardian of the sheep, such a reprimand would be given as would make the hearer's ears tingle for an hour. While Geordie was at times strict and stern, he was on the whole reasonable and obliging. Being skilled regarding the treatment of various animal ailments, he often rendered helpful service to farmers around, who were far from a Veterinary Surgeon. After a number of years a decent present was subscribed for by his grateful neighbours, and given to the shepherd in token of appreciation. In various matters affecting the welfare of the community he gave assistance, which showed his unselfishness.

He was never afraid of hard work, and, being strictly temperate in habits, lived a remarkably healthy life. Still, after many years, his agility decreased, and another man went the rounds that Geordie used to go. One wonders if in his morning and evening ascents and descents on the lone and lofty moorland our brave shepherd indulged in sentimental or poetic thoughts?

He certainly profited by his abundance of healthful exercise, and the general absence of irritating human friction was good for his peace of mind. Did a beautiful sunrise or a gorgeous sunset charm his solitary journeys?

Perhaps the melody of a variety of wild birds was sweet to his soul? One sober fact is certain, his frequent wettings while walking over rough, soft ground left him an unwelcome legacy of rheumatic pains, and, latterly, he could not have attempted the heroic deed which saved from threatening danger one young man, who continues one of Geordie's most grateful and ardent admirers.

This young man was none other than our former acquaintance, Robert Tod, who, by the way, has in his time had considerable variety of experience. Robert was out with a milk cart, to which was yoked a spirited young mare, who liked not to wait in strange places among clamorous noises. At first extra care had been taken to keep the mare well in hand. Afterwards no danger was dreaded, the animal behaving as if she were ten instead of five years. But, alas! the unexpected happened. Robert was going homeward, seated in his cart, when, at a little cluster of houses, some unseemly uproar occurred. The highly strung mare, with patience nearly exhausted on the slow outward journey, was stepping at a free pace, only needing a little fright to make her break into a mad gallop. Barrels and tin vessels soon rattled wildly, and faster rushed the mare over the rough roadway. Her good behaviour having vanished, she literally "took the bit between her teeth," and flew with frightful energy. On went the helpless youth, just a little relieved when a narrow bridge was safely passed, holding the reins as best he could. Just past the bridge was where the heroism of Geordie Broon came in.

Stepping home from an outlying part of his moor, with two dogs behind him, he saw the runaway mare and the helpless plight of young Tod. Bidding the dogs lie down, he threw off his plaid, buttoned his jacket, and went to the roadside. As the frenzied animal advanced, Geordie stood holding his staff by the ferrule end; then at the right

instant he hooked the crook over the tight reins, and running alongside, pulling the mare towards him, he gradually got closer to her head, and stayed her headlong course within twenty yards.

To the credit of Geordie Broon, be it said, he never posed as a hero over that exciting incident. Small wonder that the scared youth was profoundly thankful to his deliverer. As for the lively mare, she was not sorely blamed, and probably was more fully considered and more carefully watched than formerly.

THE OLD CARRIER.

A GENIAL optimist was little Andrew Saunders, farmer and carrier, of Glenside, a short distance from Bentybrae. He delighted in a neighbourly crack and joke, and when a good snuff could be enjoyed therewith he was happy. While he was an inveterate snuffer, he would not tolerate smoking. For an easy-going man, seldom, if ever, in a hurry, he had little patience with any young ploughman who was a smoker or wore boots.

Sometimes it would be said to him, "Man, Andra, I wonder to hear ye rinnin' doon ane that smokes tobacco; dae ye no mind that ye're snuffin' it up ye're nose every day?" "Snuff," retorted the old humourist, "that wastes nae time, but when a man smokes he's wastin' time whenever he fills his pipe, an' when ye coont up the time he spen's lacin' a pair o' big buits it'll come to a month in the twelve." Be it noted here that Andrew always wore a pair of shoes.

Though it is not claimed that he was wiser than many of his neighbours, he was assuredly pawky and shrewd, and

had a fairly good opinion of his own abilities. Happily, too, he was mostly on good terms with himself, as he usually was with all who acted decently by him. Those who wronged or offended him seldom got off Scot-free, for should it happen that Andrew's cheerful good nature gave out, the one who had caused it soon knew he had a caustic tongue.

Andrew, in his youthful years, had been unhampered, and alike unhelped by worldly possessions.

The earliest record available bears that with willing hands, and with pick, shovel, and wheelbarrow he had been a prospector for ironstone in an "opencast" not far from Drumley Water, from which ore was carted over a steep moorland road to what was either the first, or among the first, iron works in Scotland.

In this connection he told of a fellow-workman who got away earlier one evening on account of having a wheelbarrow to take for repair in the village where he lived. While still about five minutes walk from the joiner's shop, six o'clock, the hour for ceasing work, arrived, and at a handy gateway the barrow was hustled out of sight until starting time next morning, when this painfully exact specimen of a working man finished his job, and went leisurely to the "opencast," quite impervious to a considerable amount of banter from his less scrupit-minded fellow-workers.

Time passed on. Andrew became possessed of a good wife, leased a small farm, and became a carrier. These remarkable advances seem to show that the man, who was diligent as a day labourer, had brains as well as willing hands, and an ambition beyond pick and shovel drudgery. The difference of temperament in a man and his wife has often been referred to, and the case of Mr and Mrs Saunders supplies a forcible illustration. While he chose to take most things in daily life as calmly as possible, his

good wife was of a serious turn of mind, and far from being satisfied oftentimes with herself or her neighbours. Andrew had often to summon patience and philosophy to his aid while many a plain lecture—with or without curtains—was given him by his better half. He either affected a little dulness of hearing, or, cunningly changed the subject, until she would cease by saying, “I’m dootin’ a’ that I say gangs in at ae ear an’ oot at the ither.” Andrew, knowing the worst was over for the time being, would indicate a lively interest in some matter out-of-doors, and after a time the smoke cleared away and the sun shone. At other times, when he was being urged to think more seriously, Andrew would sit smiling to the child on his knee, or saying to it while it crowed and prattled, “Be quate, be quate, my wee lammie, I canna hear yer mither.” Then she too would smile, and serenity again returned.

One good quality Andrew had which greatly furthered harmony in the home: his geniality and his inability to keep up a huff did much to restore peace and pleasure.

In the matter of family worship, once more common than now, the ideas of Mrs Saunders were very strict. On one occasion, when her guidman was laid down with sickness, Jock Graham, a kind neighbour, attended to many orra turns about barn, stable, and stackyard. Jock was no inexperienced youth, but all the same he was unprepared for one call made upon him. One peaceful gloaming the guidwife of Glenside, in all sincerity and solemnity, asked him to “tak’ the Book,” as was the term for conducting family worship. He was speechlessly surprised, and the two stared at each other, until looking around as if in dumb quest of some relief, Jock bethought him of some unfinished work, and said, “Na, na, Mrs Saunders, I’ll cut a pickle gerse for the kye, dae onything I can aboot the doors, or e’en tak’ aff the weans’ buits an’ claes, but no that, *no that*.”

In this connection, another incident.—An aged relative, being on a visit once when Andrew was off to Edinburgh with his carrier's cart, was about to conduct family worship. Turning over gently the big Bible, he quietly remarked, "This Bible has lost some o' its leaves, I'm thinkin'." Quick as thought came the impatient response from Mrs Saunders, "There's mair there than ye'll read the nicht." The old friend selected a portion in silence, and the worship was proceeded with in a becoming manner.

Over a wide range of moorland farms and cottars' houses the carrier went his rounds in fine and foul weather, buying supplies to be taken to the city, and handing over such articles as had been on order since his previous journey. He was wide-awake at bargain making. However prices might rise or fall, his good humour kept in the ascendancy, and his ready wit often helped his profit, and made him more popular with his customers. With little of school or book learning, he was a wonderfully well-informed man concerning many practical matters. His close observation of men and events, linked to a reflective bent of mind, did much to make him an intelligent, companionable man. When in a thoughtful mood, he would say, "It's a strange thing, but I've seen that when a man's gettin' on weel, a' thing seems to flow in on him, but when he's gaun back the brae, the very craws are pookin' awa' frae him."

Andrew was seldom downhearted, and certainly showed pluck and courage by going, while well advanced in years, to and from the town with his cart. Of course, in addition to his horse, he had the company of a trusty dog, and a strong whip with thick handle of tough hazel.

Though far from having the appearance of a fighting man, he was brave and resourceful, and in self-defence his pluck would have showed to advantage.

One of his amusing experiences may be related. While

he and some others were taking rest and refreshment at one of the wayside inns, more common then than since the advent of railways, the talk turned upon plain feet, and one of the company said to Andrew, "I see you have a very plain foot." Said Andrew, "It's no the plainest in the room, I'll warrant." The rest of the company were appealed to, and the evidence seemed to be against the brave old man, but his last move had not been made, and he said, "I'll wager a croon I'll let ye see a plainer fit, freends." "Done," said the first speaker, and tabled his money. Up went the carrier's left foot, his plainest one, and he called out, "The croon's mine, it was my richt fit ye spoke aboot first," and now all agreed laughingly that auld Andrew Saunders had easily won.

Although little of a walker, it is on record that on at least one occasion he ran the "bruse" at a country wedding, and actually won the race, though information is not available regarding the competitors.

He was a quaint old-world type of the cannie, pushing Scotsman in humble circumstances. He was more eager to see the bright side of life than to grumble or lament about the gloom, and so his example perhaps appealed to some who were in need of a lesson in cheerfulness.

Latterly, when his family were all in homes of their own, and he had experienced many changes, he retained not a little of his former vivacity, and drove with a pony and trap collecting chickens, game, and calves for the Edinburgh market.

The long journeys by cart were over, and Andrew then travelled by train, until the time drew near when he was called on to journey the way of all flesh, even unto the unseen Beyond.

THE OLD THATCHER.

THE village of Fallus, over a mile from Bentybrae, was the home of James Shearwell, the subject of this reminiscence. While thatching had formerly been his chief occupation, as years sped, and roofs of red tiles and blue slates became more and more common, Jamie Sherrel, as he was familiarly called, became much more than a thatcher. He was an adaptable, make-the-best-of-it little man, and though at first sight some might think him of little account, mentally or physically, he gave evidence of being sterling. His thatching, like his other work, soon to be told of, was always well done, and slow but sure was his method of work. The house he lived in was his own, and he kept the straw-covered roof in such good repair that it was a good advertisement of his ability and attention.

While the "stitch in time" practice is ever wise, no less so is it a sign of wisdom to mend a damaged roof promptly. A few "stapples," or stop-holes, will prevent a larger breach. Thatchers there have been who did not regard the slope of a roof sufficiently, and pierced the holes for the "stapples" in a perpendicular manner, so that after a time rain or melted snow got through easily. Not so with Jamie. He gave the twisted points of his "stapples" an upward slope, and pressed the straw so closely together on the turf below it, that so long as the material kept fresh there was a water-tight roof, making water glide off as it does "from a duck's back."

On one occasion, a double testing took place on the roof of a house that the leal thatcher was repairing, the man and the newly-placed straw remaining invulnerable. It was New-Year's day, and, as the weather was favourable, the sensible old stinger (old Scots) kept steadily at work. Some tippling miners, and others who respected

him as a quiet, industrious neighbour, freely offered him a share of the bottled spirits they were too freely imbibing. Jamie pled, "I'm no tastin' the day, wait till auld Neerday," knowing well that by that date spirits would be scarcer. Again and again the offer was renewed with silly cajolery. With a quiet word now and then Jamie kept on at his stinging, only coming to the ground for another bunch of straw when the tipplers were indoors.

At length one, bolder, and maybe a little steadier than the others, climbed the ladder behind Jamie, and filled a glass for him to drink. Putting it to his lips, and saying, "Here's to ye a'," he made a feint of slipping a little, and spilled the glassful on his newly put-in thatch. The man with the bottle made in reality a greater slip, and rolled down from the low roof on to a heap of straw, quite unhurt. The bottle, falling on bare ground, was smashed, and, sad to say, a woman of the company standing near stooped down to drink what she could of the fiery liquid ere it soaked into the earth. Truly there was a wide contrast when her conduct is compared with that of Jamie Sherrel's! One or two of the onlookers were sober enough to conclude that Jamie was wise and the woman was otherwise, and for many years the incident was related all around when excessive fondness for strong drink was spoken of.

When Jamie had no roofs to mend, he was a drainer and digger of gardens, a planter of potatoes, and willing to turn his hand to any kind of agricultural work, save ploughing and carting.

In haytime and harvest he was a very useful assistant. Being specially expert with the old-time reaping hook, where there were borders, tangled places, and openings not so easily got at with a scythe, Jamie and his hook were sure to do what was needed effectively.

Like a good many others in Drumley Water district, including sons and daughters of farmers in humble circum-

stances, Jamie went every season to the east country harvest, getting back generally in time for the reaping and ingathering of oat crops in the higher locality around Bentybrae. With a few articles of clothing tied in a red handkerchief, and his hook blade wrapped in a straw rope, the light-footed, kindly-eyed old man cheerfully trudged about sixteen miles, repeating the experience as he returned. Eyes and intellect were fully open to sights and impressions to be had by the way, and it was to him in some respects a pleasure trip, of which he had very few.

A calm, yet ardent lover of Nature, probably at heart he was a veritable poet, but of that more anon.

On one occasion, soon after better railway convenience was introduced, John Tod, of Greycrags, one of his employers nearer home, said to him, "I'm sure, Jims, ye would be far quicker an' easier to gang an' come wi' the train." Quietly the pleasant blue eyes twinkled, and Jamie, the admirer of woods and fields, said, "That would dae nae guid, I would juist need to toddle back again to see the country." In the face of this, John could say no more. In walking and working, the old thatcher was often bare-headed, bare-breasted, and bare-footed, being one who perspired exceeding freely.

Regarding poetry, the author has vivid remembrance of a wet harvest afternoon, when the harvesters were being sheltered in the farm kitchen at Greycrags. Some one who knew him to be somewhat of a versifier, pressed him to recite some of his effusions, and Jamie, with an earnestness that was almost solemnity, gave first one piece and then another, to the delight of his wondering listeners. One piece referred to a dog, and the other to a peesweep.

He seemed very much a child of Nature, and had joy in her attractions and charms.

He loved kittens, sparrows, lambs, and all the gentler and more helpless creatures he met with. He has been

known to shield the humble frog from annoyance. Jamie was also a thrasher with the flail, not now heard within many miles of Bentybrae. Early in the nineties the measured beat of a flail was heard out that way, and in fit conjunction there came to the nostrils of the listener the odour of peat reek.

One more occupation to Jamie's credit has to be mentioned. He was a first-class maker of heather besoms and ranges, or scrubbers. Many strolling men were in the same line, but still Jamie Sherrell's make could sweep them all away !

He had known trials, yet in his declining years he was genial, and it was a satisfaction to know him intimately. He loved the braes of Drumley, and spent many busy years on its sunnier side, then passed away "like a shock of corn fully ripe."

WHEN THE RAILWAY CAME TO BENTYBRAE.

ABOUT fifty years ago there was not a passenger train running within a good many miles of Drumley Water. The Bentybrae "bodies" seldom went so far from home as to need a steam coach. When they did, they had to go as best they might a long distance to the nearest railway station. Sometimes a slow-going farmer's, or carrier's cart gave a lift along. A few of the more well-to-do had a dog-cart, van, or gig, but still there were a number who drove their "own pair" along the wet or dusty roads, pausing now and again for a few handfuls of water to cool their thirsty throats, at a wayside spout.

Time was, previous to this state of matters, when on some eight or ten miles of an uplying railway track a

passenger carriage was run morning and evening. This vehicle, for all classes, at one price, was drawn by an able-bodied horse, old enough and wise enough to be trusted not to run too hard, and much less likely to indulge in running away.

It was in this primitive means of conveyance that witty old Doctor Macweale once found himself when a lady passenger was loudly bewailing slow progress. There was a head wind on an uphill track, and the load being heavier than usual, the horse went at a snail's pace almost. Moreover, worse luck was in store, for, owing to the hard strain, a hoof and shoe parted company, and this meant a long wait on the verge of Muldron moor, while the blacksmith in Fallus replaced the shoe. The lady referred to, anxious to get westward as far as Wishaw before nightfall, was nearly inconsolable, and wailed out, "O sic a wait, sic a wait, we'll no get to oor journey's en' the nicht." The doctor smilingly, soothingly responded, "Well, well, Mrs Gow, have patience, if we don't get there to-night we shall surely be there very early to-morrow morning." It may be stated that when the coach was about to have a downhill run, the horse was taken up on a low carriage at the back, and given some provender to eat by the way.

Afterwards an engine ran carriages on that track for some time, then an extension towards Edinburgh was made by way of Bathgate, but for some unknown reason the passenger service on this branch lapsed until about the time when another Company projected the new line now to be referred to.

Early in the sixties, railway surveyors came along by Bentybrae with measuring chains, flag poles, and theodolites, wading through moss or meadow, corn, turnip, or hay field. They were prospecting for a direct line between

Glasgow and Edinburgh, to be known as the Cleland and Mid Calder branch.

Those who had never seen the initial stages of railway making stared and wondered, even questioned if these smart, spruce-looking measurers really knew quite well what they wanted to accomplish. Their appearance and talk were little akin to those of the natives, still they were civil, and knew well when they got good bread and butter, cheese, and milk at the farm houses, when their active exercise in the open air had whetted their appetites. Again and again the surveyors returned, sometimes slightly varying their line of operations.

Those courteous "Ceevil Engineers," as they were called, must sometimes have laughed over the simple, curious questions that the rural dwellers plied them with. Sometimes the glowing pictures of improved travelling facilities, prosperous times, and high prices, to follow in the wake of the new line, were accepted with greater credence by the unsophisticated country folks than the cunning romancers expected. They were sly blades, those surveyors, but paid well for what they got, and were treated with wonderful respect, although for trampling through growing crops they were reckoned barbarians.

A time came when, by a huge poster headed, "To Be or Not To Be," the public were invited to meet in a public school. When the large and representative company, as the newspaper report had it, had been treated to some rosy word-pictures of "the good time coming," should railways be made, all present, save two officials of the other railway company, voted as one man in favour of the railway. For long after, some of these guileless-minded natives imagined that that meeting decided the whole matter.

In course of time operations were commenced at various points along the pegged-off track. Local excitement began

to grow. In the field, the shop, and the mine little else was talked of.

Willie Cook, the shoemaker, said he would "bum" his lasts below the bed and go out to share in the big wages, but he did not go. Strong, rough navvies came on the scene, with picks, shovels, and wheelbarrows. What with making of drains, building of culverts, bridges, retaining walls, and viaducts, making low places high, and high places low, there was much stir in these formerly quiet regions. Freestone quarries were utilised for building purposes. Many horses, carts, and tip-waggon came on the scene, and in their spare time nearly every boy, youth, and man in the district came to see the railway being made. Stabling, stores, and sleeping accommodation for men had to be secured or erected, this last in the most primitive and temporary manner.

The navvies' huts were exceedingly meagre in cubic space, while at the grocery and provision stores for their convenience, prices were decidedly above the average.

The population of the district increased by leaps and bounds for a time, and the wonted calm was rudely dispelled. Over all roadways intersected by the new railway, huge cranes were erected, and swung with clanking chains, terrorizing old and young as they passed, and not infrequently causing timid horses to tremble all over. After a time "pug engines," or small tank locomotives, were introduced for haulage purposes, instead of horses, and an additional show of realism was imparted to the undertaking. Cattle and horses, totally unused to the iron horse, would run to the furthest end of the field. Their owners saw a new evil in store, and questioned the benefit that had been promised. Further, when volumes of black smoke from the "pugs" lowered on the white wool of the sheep and the golden crops of oats or barley,

the railway was thought to be a vile and noxious innovation.

All the while through spring, summer, and winter, part of the time by night as well as by day, the hardy navvies worked to good purpose dislodging stiff clay, hard rock, or shifting moss, filling hollows, cutting through knowes and hills, until the work was completed. While the navvy is not always famous for good behaviour, there was not very much of disorder. Now and again some of them quarrelled, and once, alas! some miles to the westward, a quiet man, engaged at railway fencing, was foully murdered, owing, it was considered, to some private dispute.

At Bentybrae one summer night a pane of glass was broken, and a Bible and part of a skim milk cheese, were taken away from the window sill.

While excitement had risen and waned, again it was in the ascendant. Hogmanay had come, and next day goods traffic was to begin. A large engine and tender rushed hither and thither several times during that short December day, but no one knew of the "baptism of blood" to take place before nightfall. Late in the afternoon the engine referred to rushed at a mad pace from West Calder to Fallus Station, then, instead of crossing to the proper line of rails, it flew back on the wrong line. Just as it was emerging from a cutting on a sharp curve, there was a contractor's pug engine taking a supply of water before going to its nightly quarters, and a fearful collision ensued. The light engine was smashed all over, even the larger one being much damaged. While some of the other men were shaken and bruised, Robert Laidlaw, the driver of the "pug," died of his injuries.

The rumbling of heavy trains duly commenced, and before summer passed passenger stations were opened, and a goodly number patronised the railway for novelty's

sake. Those who had occasion to go by the new line to Edinburgh or Glasgow were looked upon with somewhat of admiration, mingled with a modicum of envy, but all comers were welcomed by the smiling railway officials.

THE HUT ON THE MOOR.

ONLY a few stonethrows from Drumley Water, on the southern and moorland side, where the knowes, hollows, and hills stretched upward to Thirlstane, Black Mount, Tormie Wheel, Bye-law-hill, and Leavenseat, stood the little farmhouse of Rashieknowe. Here Peter Thorburn, with wife and family, lived and toiled indoors and outdoors for a good many years.

The houses were lowly and thatch-covered, and around were, as usual in such cases, a number of old ash trees. Year after year the Thorburns strove, with varying success, to get a living, and "mak' things a kennin' better." Their fields were bare, wet, and high-lying, and, as there was generally over-competition when farms were to let, the rent was higher than it ought to have been. Little need the wonder be then, when it is told that the family at Rashieknowe resolved to emigrate, and expend their industry on soil much more likely to yield a satisfactory return. There was no boom in emigration about fifty years ago; moreover, there was more time and endurance of discomfort required than is the case now, when large numbers are going abroad. The Thorburns did not *all* emigrate, for Maggie, one of the fair-haired winsome daughters, had so charmed young Robert Thom, that he proudly made her his wife.

On a small croft, westward some four miles, and quite near to the source of Drumley Water, stood "the hut on

the moor," which for a time was the home of the loving couple. A byre for two cows was attached, but the whole accommodation was rather scanty. Around was enough of breathing space, and for company the sheep on the moor and the birds of the air were daily to be depended on.

There were no railways, pits, nor public works anyway near, but soon after, the ground, so poor on the surface, was found to be rich underneath with coal and ironstone.

A limestone mine, for the supply of the local kilns, was also further developed, and a railway to connect these mineral fields with West of Scotland iron works was constructed. This railway, with its smoke-breathing, fire-spitting locomotive, was the means of bringing apparent disaster to Robert and Maggie Thom, while they were cheerfully striving to improve their home and circumstances.

The hut in which they lived was thatched with straw, or heather maybe, pulled from the moor, and that was where the danger lay. There came a breezy March day, when clouds of dust careered along the turnpike at one end of the croft. From the mines, a few miles eastward, came an engine, panting with a heavy load, and breathing fire as it lumbered along. Red sparks ignited dry grass and heath by the way, and, alas! one glowing cinder dropped on the roof of the humble, cosy abode of the Thoms. The young wife was at hand, and the men from the engine soon joined her, but the flames could not be stayed, and the modest steading was destroyed.

The moor birds had flown, with eerie cry, far from the fierce fury of the fire. In the springtime all "birds of the wilderness" are more or less accustomed to the "moor-burn" process by which old growth is consumed, leaving the ground clear for new and tender growth. The fire on the croft, with the loudly hissing engine standing near, was

more unnatural, and even the sheep gave the place a wide berth.

Some salvage of household effects was accomplished, and, fortunately, the cows were out at the other end of the croft, but she was a sadly distressed young housewife who gazed at the devastation on that clear spring day. Neither sunshine, springing grass, nor singing lark could, for hours afterwards, restore her happiness of mind. The men had gone on with their train, after a few sympathetic words and looks. Maggie Thom went near the cows that knew her careful attention, then sat down and wept. Yes, blessed tears came to her relief for a time, then, wearied and worn out by the terrible strain she had undergone, she slept for an hour or so beside a sheltering bush. When she awoke, calm thought reigned in her mind, and she recalled the home of her maidenhood, thinking of the firm faith and wise teaching of her God-fearing father, now with other dear ones so far away.

Robert Thom had, in the morning, gone to work some two miles distant, but, as "ill news travel fast," he had in some way or other got word of the burning of his dwelling, and was even now hastening homeward.

Maggie's face lighted on his approach, yet neither husband nor wife knew well how to comfort each other. After a time they asked, but in vain, "Whaur are we to bide noo, and whaur will the kye get shelter?" The answer was coming, even before the question had been audibly asked. In this world of ours influences are operating on our behalf sometimes when we think not. No footstep was heard on the soft ground, but a shadow appeared, and a kind voice, evidently somewhat under restraint, said, "Come awa' up by to Knoweheid, you twa, an' we'll tak' the kye wi' us, there's room for a'." A short and simple speech, yet overflowing with comfort. "Ye're very kind to us, Tammass," said Robert Thom

fervently, and even more eloquent than words were the grateful looks of his wife. It will be borne in mind that old Scottish people were very undemonstrative, especially when feeling deeply.

"Dear me, freends," said leal old Thomas Tod, "I would be a hard-hearted, un-Christian wratch if I did ocht else; come yer wa's, an' bring the kye." Thomas, it may be explained, was near of kin to Maggie's mother, so he doubtless realised that in addition to the claims of common humanity, he was bound by a still closer tie. A droll, kind-hearted man he was, one who was a credit to the old Scottish stock. He was at times impulsive, and it was told that on one occasion, when shearing in the east country, he and others fell to the "kemping," that was, trying who were quickest with the reaping hook.

At such times work was roughly done, and some employers sternly discountenanced the practice. At this time the gentleman farmer, for whom the "kempers" were shearing, came up on horseback, and, finding his words of command ineffectual, he spurred his charger in among the growing crop in front of the eager shearers, and dared them to continue. Tammas blurted out, "I'll buy an acre o' yere corn, an' I *wull* kemp, for there's nane can gang afore me." The heat of the contest soon, of course, died down, and there was no more "kemping" until the next time, probably when the man on horseback was known to be well out of the way.

When the considerate Tammas Tod had got his neighbours to turn their backs on the dust and ashes of what had been for a time their pleasant home, he still forbore from saying much about the rather dreary circumstances, but he assured them that Nannie, his guidwife, would make them welcome upby at Knoweheid. Then, seeing another railway train passing, he broke out, as many elderly people did at that stage in the world's history,

against the new method of transit. "Thae puffin, fiery, clankin', killin' railroads are a perfect abomination; I'm sure plenty o' horse an' cairts micht be got to dae the wark, an' wi' far less noise an' reek. We hae dune lang without them, an' could braw weel hae dune longer."

But now his attention had to be given to getting the cows turned in at his own road-end, for the younger man was supporting his wife by the arm, she, at that time, having a woman's burden to bear. Mrs Tod received them most sympathetically, laying more stress on what she was able and willing to do for them than on the forlorn state in which they were placed. With admirable tact and hospitality they were accommodated at Knoweheid until other arrangements were made.

In that home Thomas Tod, like others of his name and class in life, conducted regularly services of praise and prayer, otherwise known as family worship. Thereafter all retired for the night, but all did not sleep, and before daylight Mrs Thom was the mother of a baby boy. To both father and mother baby's arrival at this crisis was a special blessing in helping to dispel sadness and supply new thoughts.

Very soon, along the banks of Drumley and around, a benevolent movement towards building a new and better home for the Thoms took practical shape. Money subscriptions, assistance by carting, and otherwise, were forthcoming, and, favoured by fine weather, the new homestead of Stonemains was promptly erected, and as far as possible from the railway track.

Tammas Tod had set the ball a-rolling, and well deserves to be kindly remembered as a "friend in need" to the Thoms.

THE OLD TOLL BARS.

MANY memories cluster round the toll bars of a past generation. Sometimes the houses were squat and ugly, with numerous windows, while at other places they were neatly picturesque, and beautified with roses and honeysuckle. Most of the houses remain as ordinary dwellings for roadmen or others, but removed for ever have been all traces of their original purpose. The posts, gates, notice boards, bars, and chains have vanished. There was usually a well-kept garden, and a flock of fowls, with a number of roadmen's tools close to the dwelling.

Toll bars were an important part of an old system for the upkeep of roads and bridges. As a vast amount of traffic that formerly had to be conveyed in carts now goes by rail, the tear and wear of public roads has been lessened, but of late, since motor vehicles of various kinds have become common, the cost of maintenance has again considerably increased. It is now over twenty-five years since toll bars were abolished, and now the roads are kept up by annual rates charged against those who have land or horses.

Being of somewhat ancient origin, and in most districts at accessible centres, around toll bars there gradually gathered a considerable amount of local history. Where there were cross-roads of importance, there was generally a fully equipped toll bar, while at certain junctions here and there were placed check-bars.

Generally there was a toll bar for every six or nine miles of road travelled, and there was a system of pass tickets when branch roads were to be used by those who had paid on the main road, or *vice versa*. The rates varied in different counties, presumably according to outlay required. Not a few of the toll bars were let by public

roup, while in other cases keepers were appointed by Road Trustees. Rates were leviable on all kinds of cattle, sheep, and horses, also on horse vehicles of every description. Carts with broad-tyred wheels were charged less than the ordinary kind, a led horse was cheaper than a saddled horse. In one county a weight of one hundredweight in a cart without springs went free ; in the next county the same cart, empty or loaded, was charged sixpence. Sheep were charged by the score, and sometimes were made to jump over a long stick that they might be accurately counted, for some canny farmers, drovers, carters, and others would not have blushed to cheat the tollman. Perhaps that class is not yet extinct. On the front of each toll bar were printed notices of all rates, charges, and exemptions, and occasionally these were consulted when disputes arose.

When the gates were open, sometimes a reckless rider would rush through without paying, and sometimes at night a gate was lifted off its hinges that a free passage might be had. The bars were often kept by a roadman's wife, and one case is on record of a woman having chastised, with a pair of horse breechings, a mean man who would not pay like a gentleman.

At some extra busy bars a burly tollman guarded the gate, and held out a strong hand for the money. On frosty winter evenings, when a number of local youths were strolling about, now and again the tollman was made sport of, as follows :—On a hard, clear road, by a rapid side motion and striking one boot against the other, a noise was made closely resembling that of a smart trotting horse, and by pausing, calling to the pretended horse, “Woa !” and shouting, “Toll !” the deception was complete, all that remained to be done being to get quickly out of reach when the trick was discovered by the angry toll keeper. Youths have ever been mischievous !

In the toll bar the one in charge was always liable to be

disturbed at any minute by day or night. Like all other occupations, the position had its benefits and its drawbacks.

It was wonderful what an attraction the toll bar had for passers-by. It seemed a veritable rest-and-be-thankful stage. Children too, and others, often congregated here, trying to stand straight on the highest post, or walking from one top to another, and maybe finishing up with a stolen swing on the big gate before running away.

Toll bars were contemporary with stage-coaches, run-away marriage parties, and the gruesome doings of the body-snatchers. In these connections, were all that has transpired put into words, many grim and stirring stories could be presented to the modern reader.

Time was when licences to sell strong drink were granted to many toll-keepers, but that system was stopped, in most cases long before the toll bars were abolished. In many rural localities the toll bar was a favourite meeting place for neighbours and cronies, also a common centre for postal matter for despatch or delivery.

Something of romance and pathos is entwined with the phrase, "the old toll bar," largely, perhaps, because they have passed away. The quaint windows, with dozens of diamond-shaped panes, or "lozenges," and sometimes ivy climbing around, with here and there a number of bee skeps behind the bleaching green—all this makes a picture that one loves often to recall.

THE LITERARY SOCIETY, AND ITS
BURNS' NIGHT.

FORTY years ago there was, in the village of Fallus, a vigorous Literary Society. Meetings were held once a fortnight in the "wee end" of a schoolhouse.

In passing, it may be told regarding this school, that once and again it was enlarged by the addition to back and front of projecting wings. A jocular observer remarked, that if any more wings were added the school might fly away. Fly away it did, after many years, making space for a more compact and commodious building.

The Literary Society consisted of many kinds of young men—ministers, doctors, and journalists in the making—teachers, bankers, and shopkeepers, miners, farmers' men, and others.

Some were fluent, some slow of speech, yet each one was somewhat studious, and the Society was, to one and all, a ladder to higher thought. The practice of reading, studying, and speaking then acquired is even yet gratefully remembered by not a few of the former members. Each meeting night an essay was read, and commented on. Afterwards two selected readings or recitations in prose or verse were given. The whole tone of the meetings made for a wider, more elevated outlook on life, demonstrating clearly that man is not a mere machine.

Then, as now, the Janwar' win's seemed to move men's minds to think and speak of, even more than at other times of the year, that famous Son of Song, Scotia's pre-eminent bard, Robert Burns. Some time in advance of the "twenty-fifth," it was arranged that the usual essay and readings should be closely in keeping with the historic date and the talented personality of our National Poet.

Previous to this, our former acquaintance, Bobby Tod, had repeatedly yielded to the subtle fascination of versifying, and this being known by his fellow-members, it was unanimously decided that Bobby, or, as he was there called, "Mr Tod," should provide the essay. The rash request was, perhaps as rashly, agreed to. The young man, then about the outer verge of his "teens," had but little of literary experience; he was only awakening to life's realities, and his experience of the more important matters of life lay all ahead of him. As day after day passed, Bobby, in his spare time, read and pondered again and again his modest copy of "Poems and Songs by Robert Burns."

Though not a "diffy," the art of knowing what to include and what to leave out, also how best to present what he had to say, was with him still unlearned.

While stepping along behind horses and plough, or when driving the horses in cart or threshing mill, the incipient essayist mused on what he had read of "the lad was born in Kyle." Little by little, in evening hours, on his home-made desk, standing in a corner behind his worthy father's arm-chair, his essay was written. Charitably passing over the quality, it has to be said that in quantity it was by no means "scrimpit." A twopenny pass-book was filled, and even the inside of the back cover was used for the concluding sentences. The author many years ago saw the production, and was glad he did not need to read it all.

To Bobby the subject was vast, and his interest was great, so that he simply had to write on till his ink-bottle was dry, his paper exhausted, and his pen worn out. All the same, "Tod's Essay on Burns" never became a classic.

There was on that anniversary occasion a more than ordinary Burns enthusiasm. Even alongside the outlying Drumley valley, in village, clachan, farm, and cottars'

houses, wherever a few people with a little leisure met, the talk soon drifted to Burns. In not a few of the humble homes on those bare uplands, where a copy of the poet's works had a cherished place, the book was brought to the front, and, in the January forenichts, read aloud by one of the number. Comments were not always lacking. Some very strictly brought-up, old-world people shook their wise heads solemnly over some of the utterances; others, perhaps nearly as wise, yet a good deal more charitable, "roosed Burns to the lift," and eagerly called for another song or poem.

Well, what was the cause of this revival of interest in and around Bentybrae? Just this: the statue of Burns in George Square, Glasgow, had been newly erected, and was at that time to be unveiled.

The renewed admiration for the Ayrshire bard touched Bobby Tod at the right time, and his susceptible mind, at the call of the Literary Society, did its best to understand and eulogise his theme. The Burns' Night arrived, and with his precious pass-book buttoned into his inside pocket, Bobby, wearing his Sunday home-spun suit, hied him briskly over the knowe between his home and the old meal mill by the side of Drumley Water. He climbed the brae to Fallus, feeling closely in touch with a man of genius.

His paper was listened to with patient attention. No one made audible complaint, some commended, and all agreed that Scotland did well to be proud of her matchless singer, Robert Burns. There were quotations and comparisons, of course, and the thanks of all to "our poet-to-be, Mr Tod."

After some applause, the readings, "A Man's a Man for a' that" and "The Cottar's Saturday Night," were given with good feeling and expression. Again the beauty, truth, and force of what Burns had said was enlarged upon, until the usual closing time was far exceeded.

Bobby Tod felt somewhat justified for his too lengthy review, and went home happy. Some of those young men that evening got an insight of Burns, as man and poet, that enabled them more correctly to estimate his real worth.

“PEACE AND GOODWILL.”

FIFTY years ago there was little of Yule-tide observance in home or church in the district around Bentybrae. There were in circulation, of course, Christmas hymns and poems, those wonderful vehicles of pleasure and instruction, and these, with an occasional appropriate sermon by some more progressive minister, paved the way for a fuller, more thoughtful observance of the blessed season.

This led to the offering of gifts and good wishes by some of the people who were more advanced in the courtesies and minor duties of life. Christmas cards and gladsome little evening parties became more common. Still, after all, Christmas—the world’s greatest anniversary—got rather scant consideration. Even yet, most devout and reflective men and women will admit that there is ample room for the practical elevation and expansion of the true Christmas spirit all around.

As an illustration of how a “word in season” at this time of holy influence may aid in furthering the work of Him who is commemorated by Christmas, the following reminiscence is narrated :—

David and Andrew Tod, in Drumley Water district, near the Bentybrae moorlands, were brothers. In youth they shared the same home, herded cattle over the same knowes, and, in hot summer days, waded in the little burn

that rippled round their father's steading, and round a number of grassy haughs in that quiet upland.

Then, as now, years passed, bringing changes, lesser and greater, into many a heart and home. The industrious youths worked with their father, and gradually the well-nigh barren heathland was changed to fertile fields.

A sad time came, when, through an accident not far from his home, their worthy father was so injured that his death soon followed.

David became farmer of Bentybrae, while Andrew was farmer of Burnside, under the same landlord. As near neighbours the brothers continued for years, without any hostility. David, ever a genial, sensible man, got along pleasantly with all reasonable people. Now and again there were occasions when Andrew's conduct showed him to have been cast in a different mould, his disposition being less harmonious and amiable.

At length, after repeated friction with his landlord, Andrew was sternly refused a renewal of his lease, and was sorely disappointed. The landlord, in furtherance of a desire to have the two rather small farms united, so that one steading might do instead of two, desired David Tod to become tenant of both as one farm. Although Andrew had got another farm, better in some respects than Burnside, he became grievously offended when David consented to become his successor at the latter place. The good-natured David was very sorry, yet the fact that he had done nothing to banish his brother from his childhood's home kept his conscience easy, and he could only regret that Andrew had made a mistake in being angry without cause.

Again, years came and went, still adding a little to human history. Youths became men, and those in life's prime advanced to age, all in turn "toiling, rejoicing,

sorrowing." The brothers worked diligently in their separate spheres. The estrangement continued. Any quiet attempts at first made by David towards a renewal of friendliness were by Andrew ignored or rudely repulsed. Thus, for a considerable part of their lives, these two were, by the blind obstinacy of one, prevented from enjoying what should, and might have been, agreeable and helpful intercourse.

They were now elderly men, and their respective families well grown-up. Still, there was an absence of proper friendship alike between old and young. Usually with young cousins there is a measure of coming and going, giving and receiving, in short a *camaraderie* that is cheerful and pleasant. David and Andrew had been well trained, and were men of faith and prayer. Happily a time came, one good Christmas season, when Andrew's hardened feelings were warmed and softened.

He had the privilege of listening to an earnest, heart-stirring sermon, which was the means of moving him to visit David in a subdued and friendly mood. The preacher, discoursing on "Christ, the Light of the World," specially emphasised these words: "He that loveth his brother abideth in the Light." That sermon, and its whole setting of praise, Scripture reading, and prayer, was a precious Christmas message to old Andrew, as his kindly visit was precious to David, who received his long-lost brother with calm cordiality, and without look or word of upbraiding. Be it remembered that old-time Scots folk were undemonstrative; still Andrew was warmly welcomed, and, as the unfriendliness had been on one side only, the reconciliation was simpler and easier.

What conversation passed at this notable meeting of the grey-haired brothers cannot now be told, but the result was evident by the glow of gladness to be seen on their

wrinkled faces, and there was more than a suggestion of lightness in their footsteps. Christmas, the birthday of the most wonderful Life this world ever knew, or ever will know, had brought into their hearts and lives Peace and Goodwill.

THE BLACKS OF BREICH WATER.

BREICH WATER.

(The following admirable and somewhat pathetic verses appeared in a Scottish newspaper a goodly number of years ago.)

THE brown muirs and the hills,
Levenseat and Fala Tap,
The moss-hags o' Muldron,
And windy Climpy Gap ;
The green fields o' Bidallan,
The holms o' Tarrydews,
The broomy braes o' Crofthead
Whaur Fauldhouse wan the broos ;
And anither man was prouder
For the winning of a bride—
Oh ! the auld days, the blythe days,
On bare Breich Water side.

There's nae place whaur the auld folk
Can say a kindlier word,
There's nae place whaur the young chiels
Are manlier or mair buird ;
There's nae place whaur the lassies
Are bonnier to see,
There's nae place whaur the bairnies
Craw crouser on the knee ;

There's nae place whaur a freen' sticks
Sae close through thick and thin,
There's nae place whaur the weary
A warmer welcome fin' ;
I ken a hunner water sides
Show braver in their pride,
But they ha'ena got the glamour
O' bare Breich Water side.

O, wae for him who errant
Has wandered far awa,
And fule-like tint the love-links
He lo'es the best o' a' ;
Wha, pent in some great city,
Pines desolate—alane,
Wi' nocht but shame to cleid him,
And nocht for food but pain ;
Wha at ilka step gangs stumbling,
Like the blind without a guide,
As he gropes his way to Death's door,
Far frae Breich Water side.

COLIN SHIELDS.

21 Stamford Street, Blackfriars,
London, E.C.

THE BLACKS OF BREICH WATER.

NOT in the water, but in humble homes along either side of it, lived the families of Blacks, of whom some information is here to be given. Taking the latter part of this subject first, it may be told that Breich Water is an upland burn, with three or four sources in the moors around Muldron Farm, at the extreme west of the county of Mid-lothian.

From Darmeid Linn, long ago a resort of Covenanters in times of persecution, to where Breich, grown almost to a modest river, flows into the Almond from Shotts hills, the distance is about twelve miles. At a point not far from Wallhill, westward from Fauldhouse, the parishes of Cambusnethan, West Calder, and Whitburn, and the counties of Lanark, Mid-lothian, and Linlithgow meet in the centre of the stream.

Stretching eastward, north of Breich Water, is the village of Fauldhouse, with Falla Hill high in the background. To the south is Levenseat, with West and East Handaxwood farms. Again, on the north side, we find Croftfoot, Falla Mill, Craighead, Liltie-co-kee, and Bents. Near Craighead and East Handaxwood, a road between Whitburn, Longridge, and Wilsontown crosses the Vale of Breich by a long narrow bridge, dated 1781.

Along both sides in this locality are, or were, numerous little homesteads, where the earlier Blacks lived and toiled in bygone years. While they did much to improve the rather wild ground, gaining a living thereby, it seems regrettable that now some of the homes they occupied, and part of the land they cultivated, are being neglected. At a good many places, where cheerful, diligent families, with a stock of horses and dairy cattle, were located, there are now homesteads in ruins, a good deal of desolation, and—some black-faced sheep.

Falla Mill is the only one of the four meal mills once on the track of Breich Water. New Mill, near Addiewell, has for many years been silent, while Breich Mill, about a mile down stream, was ignobly buried under a huge bank of spent shale from the oil works over twenty years ago. Grange Mill, near the meeting of Breich and Almond Waters, is now only faintly traceable.

Northward from West Calder a short distance, Breich Water curves round by City Farm and Gunsgreen, joining

the Almond a little way down the woody vale. Time was, some sixty or seventy years ago, when Breich was pure as a moorland stream usually is, but the underground workings around Fauldhouse caused a defilement.

This outline history is chiefly for the purpose of tracing genealogical lines from over two centuries past until the present time. While there is not much of a strange or heroic nature to tell, it is an evident fact that the Blacks have borne a creditable part in upholding the name and fame of the law-abiding, God-fearing Scottish peasantry, whose fame can never perish.

Descended, as has been stated on the authority of Sir T. Weymss Reid, biographer of William Black, the famous author, from the Clan Lamont, some of the family became located at Calla, near Carnwath. One of the number, named James, had several sons. Of these, William, who perhaps found the home nest too small, or who was ambitious to carve out a way for himself, migrated some dozen miles northward to Liltie-co-kee, in Whitburn Parish, Linlithgowshire. About fifty years ago that rather curious name, Liltie-co-kee, gave place to one which, if less picturesque, is more easily understood. Two railway bridges, on the Bathgate and Morningside railway, were built in front of the little steading, and since then the name has been Bridgend. Southward the view takes in Holehouseburn, Rashiehill, Woodmuir, and the Hendrey's Course moorland ridge which divides Mid-lothian county from that of Lanark. Tormie Wheel and Levenseat moorland heights are also visible.

To William, the first of Breich Water, and his wife, Mary Tod, were born six sons and two daughters. From this pioneer family, settled among the moors well over two hundred years ago, there have been many descendants, male and female. Throughout Scotland, England, and Ireland they have migrated, while Canada, America,

Australia, New Zealand, and other places, have had many worthy emigrants from among the brave Blacks of Breich Water.

In the lowly thatch-roofed home, with the quaint name, were born the six sons, in the following order—James, John, William, David, Robert, Alexander. That readers may not be over-wearied by a too lengthy record, reference, as brief as possible, to their several descendants will be made in the order of seniority.

James succeeded his father in the croft or farm of Liltie-co-kee, his wife being Agnes Mochrie. There were two sons and five daughters. William, eldest son, was married to Catherine, daughter of Mr Waddell, of Croft-head, and their family consisted of two daughters. The William just mentioned became laird of East Whitburn. Even a modest lairdship is a desirable thing. Maybe he married “a lass wi’ a tocher.” James, second son of James, became a Dissenting Minister in Dundee, and died there, it is stated, but, unfortunately, there is here a total blank in the historical record. Some one may yet supply some of the missing links. It may be stated, that in Whitburn Churchyard is an old gravestone, in good preservation, recording the deaths of William Black and Mary Tod, the former in 1742, the latter in 1767 (age not given); also the death of their eldest son, James, in 1800, aged 78 years, and Agnes Mochrie, his wife, in 1802, aged 73 years. Further, William, son of James, died in 1829, aged 68 years, and his wife, Catherine Waddell, in 1834, aged 80 years. Owing to complete lack of information regarding the Black who became a minister, and the fact that his elder brother had no male issue, it is necessary to reckon line of descent through John, second Liltie-co-kee son, who represents the second generation of Breich Water Blacks. His wife was Helen Steel, of Turnhigh, her

grandfather having been a proscribed Covenanter in the reign of Charles II.

Regarding Mr Steel, it is told that on one occasion, having come from a hiding place in the adjoining moors to visit his household for a short time, he was rudely interrupted, while reading from his Bible, by the approach of armed soldiers in search of him.

With his Bible in hand, he went hastily by the usual inside passage to the byre. Seeing some newly-cut grass placed in readiness for feeding the cows, he lay down beside it, and was promptly covered over by one of his family.

When the persecuting soldiers had searched the dwelling, they gave attention to the out-houses, and, coming to the heap of grass, one of the number actually pierced it with his sword. The on-looking relatives silently trembled lest the husband and father should be wounded, or mayhap killed outright, but no sound came from under the grass.

The troopers departed, and, when well away, the grass was removed, and Mr Steel was found unscathed. On lying down with Bible in hand, he had placed it over his heart, and the sword-point was stayed by the Sacred Book.

To John and Helen were born five sons and five daughters. This John was a crofter and lime master, his home being Bushdyke, near Leavenseat, where the lime-kilns were situated. In these days, when artificial manures were unknown, lime as a fertilizing agent, especially for stiff heathland newly broken up with the plough, was very important. For lack of wheeled vehicles and roads, lime, like some other commodities, was carried in bags or creels on horseback.

Before taking leave of John, it may be told that when a youth of 18 years he stood on some favourable height

and saw the battle of Falkirk in 1745. He died aged 98 years. Doubtless simple living, with pure air and little worry, contributed to longevity in the less feverish days long past.

Levenseat Hill, over 1,200 feet above sea level, and so-named because in Covenant times a Presbytery of eleven sat there, is slightly south-west of Bushdyke. From the summit, in clear weather, a varied and extensive all-round view can be obtained.

On the rough moorland, traces of the old-time home are still plainly observable, though in the interval a second Bushdyke has been built, and is now crumbling into ruins.

William, eldest Bushdyke son, farmed first at Westburn, and next at Blackburn, whither he moved about 1800. His wife, Jane Cleland, became the mother of three sons and five daughters, viz., John, William, and James, Margaret, Helen, Janet, Agnes, and Elizabeth, who went to Canada, and died there a few years ago. Mrs James Forbes, a daughter of Helen, is now living in Carluke.

William having died, through being thrown from one of his carts, his son John, a quaint, typical Scot, succeeded him at Blackburn, and was married to his cousin, Agnes Black, Starryshaw. To this couple were born, at Blackburn, four daughters—Janet, Agnes, Margaret, and Elizabeth, the two latter still living; while at Craighead, where they removed to, two sons—William and Richard, were born.

John, one winter evening, had been enjoying a warm drink, that delighted and greatly benefitted him. After he was done stirring, sipping, and slowly swallowing, he signified his high approval by saying, "That's gude, uncommon gude, it's amazin' some folk's sae keen o' whisky."

William, married to Janet Robb, Haywood Mains, was afterwards farmer at Fauldhouse, and now at Leadloch.

They have three sons—John, James, and William, also seven daughters—Mary, Agnes, Margaret, Janet, Elizabeth, Annie, and Dinah, the latter being the only one in the family unmarried.

This so-called history being mainly to trace the male line of descent and branches, the female line will be indicated very briefly.

John, eldest Leadloch son, is farmer of Robertson Mains, Dolphinton, and his eldest son, William, now twenty years of age, is senior member of the seventh generation of the Blacks of Breich Water.

James, second Leadloch son, with wife and family occupy the farm of Fauldhouse, formerly tenanted by his father.

William, third son, has been several years at Boksburg, South Africa.

Richard, second son of John of Craighead, lives with wife and family at East Whitburn. John, the eldest son, is about twenty years of age, the other sons being Walter Annan, and Richard. There are two daughters—one married and one unmarried.

William, second son of William of Westburn, was born there in 1797. About 1830 he became tenant of East Handaxwood, which he retained with credit for full fifty years. He was married in 1833 to Elizabeth, daughter of Alexander Smith, and died in 1884.

William used to rehearse now and again that in ancient lawless times bands of wandering reivers went hither and thither over the countryside, living by the way on the sometimes scanty food supplies of industrious crofters or small farmers. Coming to a lonely dwelling one day, not far from Drumley Water, the usual demand for something to eat and drink was made. The gudewife set out a goodly pile of oaten furls, the heel of a kebbuck, and plenty of clear spring water, telling her unwelcome visitors that she

could do no more for them. "Ye hae some kye," said the leader, "Whaur's the milk, is't in the kirn here?" and forthwith the appetising lapped milk, nearly ready for churning, was soon disappearing, much to the regret of the thrifty gudewife. The gudeman, being at home, joined in the feast with the marauders, though the glum looks of his wife were often turned his way. When oatcakes, cheese, and milk were exhausted, husband and wife were left alone. "Sic a vexation," said the woman, "an' what made it waur was your takin' pairt wi' them, an' helpin' to tim my kirn." "Wheesht, wheesht, my wifie, I'll no be hungry the day again, I thocht it best to hae a share, for I saw it was gaun gear onywey."

At Handaxwood, four sons, William, Alexander, John, and James were born, also eight daughters.

William was farmer at Falla Hill, and next at Couch, until his death in 1894. To him and his wife, Isabella Fleming, were born four sons, William, John, Alexander, and James, also four daughters, of whom only the eldest, Mrs J. S. Waddell, is now alive, having one son and two daughters.

William, eldest son, having died in youth, John, second son, became his father's successor, and, with his wife, daughter, and son, live on the banks of Almond Water, near Polkemmet.

James, his wife, and daughters, live in Denver, U.S.A.

Alexander, second East Handaxwood son, at thirty-three years of age, and unmarried, met his death in 1873 on the C.R. railway at Holytown (old station) while acting as Relief Inspector.

John, third son of William, of East Handaxwood, with one daughter and one surviving son, reside in Glasgow. By means of his verses in local newspapers, he has directed not a little attention to his native district, to which he is ardently attached.

James, fourth East Handaxwood son, with his wife and two daughters, live at Woodfords, near Portland, Maine, U.S.A., and he too still cherishes a warm regard for the friends and scenes of life's earlier years.

The East Handaxwood daughters were Agnes, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Margaret, Janet Helen, Catherine Jemima Ronaldson, and Christina. With the exception of Mary, all were married, and their descendants count up to a goodly total, there being, besides several grandchildren, at least one great-grandchild.

Only the youngest of those daughters continues to live near Breich Water side. Truly, time works changes !

James, third Westburn, or Blackburn, son, married Margaret Prentice. After being some time at Blackburn and at Addiewell, he spent the remainder of his years at Turniemoon, near West Calder.

The author remembers hearing of James, his uncle, having been talking of the new cemetery at West Calder as his probable burying place, although he considered he had a claim to a lair in the older burying ground beside the old Church. Waxing warm regarding his rights, he declared emphatically that he "could force himself into the auld Kirkyard in spite o' a' wha would seek to hinder." This way of putting the statement caused some merriment in those who were listening, though, of course, they dare not laugh outright.

William and John were the sons of the family, the six daughters being Janet, Jane, Margaret, Agnes, Elizabeth, Helen, all of whom were married. Two of the number are still wonderfully hale, the others being now deceased.

William died some years ago, survived by four sons—James, William, David, John. John, second son of James, of Turniemoon, lives in Broxburn; also his three sons, James, John, and David.

John, the lime-master's second son, became farmer at

Crooklands, Auchengray, near to the Calla crofts previously referred to. Catherine Leckie, his wife, bore him four sons and four daughters.

John succeeded his father, having as wife his cousin, Elizabeth Black, from Blackfaulds. They had a numerous family of both sexes. After leaving the farm, and staying some time in Longridge, the whole family emigrated to New Zealand about 1859.

Thomas, second Crooklands son, married Agnes Inglis, and farmed, first at Knowton, and next at Wester Breich, in company with his son, James, who had been in America.

John, his eldest son, went with his wife and children from Knowton to New Zealand, but reports from that far country are often scanty, so here, as elsewhere, the thread is broken.

James afterwards went from Wester Breich to Kirkcudbrightshire.

Catherine, one of the Knowton daughters, was married to Alexander Storrie, Dykehead. One son, Alexander, with wife and family lives at Balmore, Stirlingshire, another at Ibrox, one daughter at Ferniegair, and one at Dykehead.

David, third Crooklands son, married to Agnes Mann, farmed Westburn, and after farming some time in Carluke district, occupied New-year-field farm till his death. It was said to be this David who, on being taxed with selling thin butter milk, and told that he had no conscience, quietly responded, "Hoots aye, I've a conscience; it's maybe like the milk, a wee thin, but I hae a conscience." His sons were John, James, David, Thomas, the latter continuing at New-year-field until going to England some years ago. John and James were farmers in Carluke vicinity, while David was located as farmer near Stirling. In this family, too, were a number of daughters with husbands and families, but various details are lacking.

Helen, a Crooklands daughter, became Mrs John Thomson, Holestock, near Longford, her sons being Robert Thomson, merchant, Longridge, and John, farmer, Kepscaith and Rashierig, whose son, John, is now an East Lothian farmer at Wheatrig, near Longniddry, having three sons and one daughter.

Mary, another Crooklands daughter, became Mrs Daniel Gardner, of Watsonfoot farm. Margaret, another daughter, was also married. Mrs Alexander, Nethermuir, Bathgate, is a descendant in the Gardner line.

James, third Bushdyke son, had as his wife, Margaret Nesbit, and was tenant of Burnside, near Turnhigh, Whitburn. There were three sons and five daughters.

John, married to Mary Grey, entered Back o' Moss in 1840. There were three sons, James, George, and John, and four daughters, Margaret, Agnes, Isabella, and Mary.

James and his wife, both deceased, left two sons, John and James, and two daughters, Mary and Janet.

George, second Back o' Moss son, is farmer at Penston, East Lothian, his wife being Elizabeth Shanks, formerly of Turnhigh. They have four sons and one daughter.

John, the eldest son, is a clergyman in Kaffraria, while the other three are devoted to agricultural pursuits in East Lothian.

John, third Back o' Moss son, is still farmer there, he and his wife, Marion Mungall, having a family of sons and daughters.

It may be noted, in passing, that Mr James Walker, merchant, Bathgate, is a grandson of John Black, formerly of Back o' Moss, his mother being Agnes, wife of James Walker, Grahamston.

Thomas, second Burnside son, was married to Ann, daughter of John Russell, farmer, Foulshiels. Soon after the birth of their one daughter, the mother died, and a few years later the father was killed by the upsetting of

his cart. The orphan girl was brought to Burnside, where she assisted her grandfather, and in course of years became Mrs John Sommerville. She is now in her widowhood, living with a son in Greenock. Another son is in Edinburgh, and there are also two daughters. It ought, in strict justice, to be told that much of the information in this history was gleaned by her during a lengthy lifetime, she being now over eighty years of age.

Alexander, third son of James, of Burnside, is highly entitled to very honourable mention, because, at the cost of his own, he saved the life of another man from drowning in the Forth near Stirling. His wife's name was Mary Galbraith. They had four sons and one daughter.

James, eldest, a baker in Glasgow, went with his family to Melbourne. He and his wife died in Dunedin several years ago. Alexander, second son, was formerly a tannery manager in London, afterwards going to Belgium. Peter, the third son, was a baker, and became a successful colonist. John, the youngest son, who had hard times in his youth, being orphaned when only four years of age, knew life as a herd-boy at Liltie-co-kee and at Craighead. He became a cooper, a musician, and, in manners and morals, a man worth knowing. With his family of sons and daughters he now lives in Glasgow. Janet, the hero's only daughter, with husband and family, went abroad, and worked themselves into comfortable circumstances.

Of the Burnside daughters, Agnes became Mrs Wm. Mungall, Helen became Mrs Peter Thornton, Rashiehill, and, in both cases, these families emigrated to America many years ago.

Margaret Thornton, Rashiehill, was married to Robert Thomson, Stonemains, near Knowton, and had several children. One son, Peter, lives in Whitburn, and another, James, lives in Bathgate. There are also several female descendants at various other places. Isabella Thornton

was married to William Stark, Cambusnethan. Mary, of Burnside, was married to Robert Stewart, West Forth. A grand-daughter, Mrs Thomas Smith, resides in Rowantree Cottage, Cambuslang. Janet became Mrs Wm. Macgregor, and Jane Mrs David Roberts, Burnbrae.

Again we return with relief to breezy Bushdyke, that another whiff of upland air may be enjoyed.

Alexander, fourth son of that family, was for long after his father's demise grieve at the lime-kilns, and lived with a sister or two, unmarried, in the old home. A droll, pawky old man, it seems, was Sandy. His kindly regard for James Steel, of Falla Mill, a sister's son, was subject of common remark for years afterwards. It was equally evident that the kindness of the uncle was not lost on the nephew, for, from being a modest carrier, he became a successful miller and victual dealer.

An anecdote of Bushdyke Sandy may be told. Being one of the company at a haystack supper, in the course of the homely talk reference was made by some of the speakers to some of their neighbours who were thought to be "gey weel-tae-dae," or the opposite. The subject was immediately changed, when, in a somewhat oracular manner, and as an outcome of his experience in collecting accounts for lime, Sandy said, "Ye may crack as ye like about wha's rich or wha's puir, but as for me I ken a' your circumstances."

Robert, fifth Bushdyke son, was born in 1775, died 1843. It would appear that Blackburn was his first holding, but it is certain that afterwards he lived at Wallhill, his first wife being Jean Walker, and his second Catherine Thomson. There were seven sons—John, unmarried; William, whose son Robert is, or was, a land steward about Inverness; Robert, who also was survived by a family; Alexander, survived by family; James, who died young; Thomas, no record; James, seventh Wallhill son,

still living in Queensland, aged eighty-three years, being the only known representative of his own generation, and probably the oldest survivor among the Blacks of Breich Water. He still writes regularly to some of his friends in Scotland. It may be noted that at present there are five or six female Blacks over eighty years of age. Wallhill daughters were Jean, Helen, and Agnes. There is a simple memorial of this family in Whitburn Churchyard.

William, third Liltie-co-kee son, was in Calderhead Farm, his wife's name being Janet Wallace. Sons—William, Robert, Richard, David. There seems to be good evidence that David, youngest son, was born at Rashierig Farm in 1774, therefore William and his wife must have gone from Calderhead to the former place. William and his wife, Janet Brown, were in Dyke Farm, Cambusnethan, having three sons and three daughters. William was married to Jane Wilson, Mains Farm, Harthill. Robert, second son, married Miss Russell, Uddingston, while Richard, the younger son, was married to Margaret Forsyth, Baton. Of Calderhead second son nothing can be told. Richard, third son, with his wife, Jane Samuel, were in Starrishaw Farm. Their only son, William, went to America. Their daughter, Agnes, as previously stated, became Mrs John Black, while the other daughter, Jane, was Mrs David Black.

David, fourth Calderhead son, had as his wife, Margaret Thomson, Muirhead, and became proprietor of New Mill, near Allanton. Happy man to be a laird! There were four sons and one daughter, the sons being—William, bachelor; James, whose son, James, and grandson, James, have their home at Allanton still; Richard, and David (bachelor).

The above Richard had two sons, David and William. The former became a sheep farmer at Northlands, Eskdale, New Zealand, with four sons—Richard, Alexander, David,

James, and at least one grandson. David, like many other Scots abroad, loves well the old kindred and homeland. William, Richard's second son, is a merchant, residing with his wife in Hamilton. Mrs Sommerville and Mrs Thomson, Richard's daughters, live, the former in Glasgow, and the latter at Bankhead Farm, Bellshill.

Liltie-co-kee again. David, fourth son, wooed and won the tender heart of Janet Flint, and was a joiner at Crossroads, quite near his old home. Four sons came to cheer the new abode. William, eldest son, a mason, had as his wife, Jane Wood. Of their two sons, David and William, the former was a mason in Longridge, his wife being Jane Black, Starryshaw. Their only son, William, occupies the farm of Easterhouse, Auchengray, having two sons, David and Alexander, and two daughters. David and his wife had two daughters, Jane and Agnes, the latter now Mrs James Tweedie.

William, second son of William Black and Jane Wood, was a tailor in Longridge, married to Elizabeth Hamilton. Their family consisted of four sons and three daughters, Elizabeth, Jane, and Janet. William, eldest son, died unmarried. John Drumond died in Addiewell in 1893, leaving a widow, one daughter, and at least five sons—John, William, Robert, George, and Gavin. David, third son, has, for many years, been time-keeper in the service of Young's Oil Company at Addiewell, having two sons and two daughters. Gavin, with wife and family, lived in Whitburn, until his death several years ago.

Jane, daughter of William, mason, Longridge, was wife of James Crawford, flesher, Longridge, and lived until about ninety years of age, having had two sons and three daughters. Her eldest son, James, became a doctor, and has been in practice in England for many years. John and Isabella are still in Longridge.

James, second Crossroads son, married Catherine

Wilson. There were two sons, James and David. There were three daughters, Janet, Margaret, and Catherine, the latter remaining unmarried. Two daughters of Janet's, and Jane Millar, are still living, while Mrs Lawson, a grand-daughter, lives in Whitburn. Mrs Muir, a daughter of Margaret, with two sons, live in Broxburn, she being now well advanced in years.

John, third Crossroads son, became farmer near Shotts, having as his wife, Isabella Russell, Rosehall. Their grandson, John, was a merchant in Shotts, while James, their son, had as his wife a Miss Gray, from Harthill. A daughter of John and Isabella became wife of Adam Smith, Shotts, and some descendants are still living there. In Whitburn Churchyard is a stone erected by Isabella Russell, mentioned above.

David, fourth son of William, of Crossroads (no mention of home or wife), evidently lived near, perhaps in a vanished home called Crossgates. One of his three daughters became a Mrs Simpson, and one of her sons is Mr John Simpson, presently joiner in Blackridge.

Robert, fifth Liltie-co-kee son, with his wife, Jane Sommerville, lived at Croftfoot. The sons were William, John, James, and one daughter named Martha. William's wife was Margaret Lithgow. They had four sons and three daughters. Robert, the eldest, farmed East Longridge, afterwards going to Milwaukee as a farmer. James became a Canadian farmer, having sons and daughters. One of the sons, James Lawson Black, became a pressman in Trenton, Nebraska. Thomas Porteous, second son of William, had as his wife, Helen, daughter of A. Bryce, Hen-nest. With a family of eight sons and three daughters, they lived at East Whitburn. Four sons became C.R. servants, passing from the lower to the higher grades, with much credit to themselves. William, the eldest, had nine sons and five daughters, several of the

former being railwaymen. Alexander had two sons in railway service. Robert went long ago to Arkansas, served in the civil war, and has filled many public offices. He had many sons and daughters. Thomas went many years ago, as schoolmaster, to Forfarshire, having one son and two daughters. George has long served the C.R. Coy., being now District Superintendent at Aberdeen, having three sons and six daughters living. John, from a humble capacity, became Station Auditor in the C.R. service.

John, second Croftfoot son, married to Janet Strathearn, was tailor in Harthill. There were eight children:—Robert, architect, Glasgow; John, of Bell & Black, match manufacturers, London—John Rankine Black, B.A., Barrister of Inner Temple, being son of last named John Black. William, a joiner, was third Harthill son; Elizabeth came next, then James, followed by Agnes, afterwards by Mary Strathearn, married to Hugh Reid, their descendants being now in Glasgow. The above lady died in 1904, aged eighty-three years. There was a son of John's named Thomas, regarding whom there are no particulars. Robert, a son of James mentioned above, with his family, lives in Glasgow, and possesses many facts, figures, and relics pertaining to his kindred, who, at home and abroad, have earned a goodly share of credit. Various other descendants of John, of Harthill, also have their abode in Glasgow.

James, second Croftfoot son, became tailor and clothier in Trongate, Glasgow. The most notable of his family of sons and daughters was William, who, after beginning his literary career on the staff of the *Glasgow Evening Citizen*, migrated to London, and, as journalist and author of many novels, gained an immortal name as an exponent of Scottish life and scenery. In our own country and in many other countries his books have a deservedly enthusiastic popularity, and are, because of their truth and purity, likely to be always regarded with favour.

“A Daughter of Heth,” “Madcap Violet,” “A Princess of Thule,” “Far Lochaber,” and “Macleod of Dare,” are worthy examples of his literary talent. William Black was a prolific writer, and altogether wrote more than thirty volumes. He died in December, 1898, aged fifty-seven years.

As evidence of how highly he was esteemed in the reading world, a spontaneous effort in Great Britain and the United States led to the erection of a massive stone and lime beacon light on Duart Point, in the Sound of Mull. Sir Wemyss Reid, his biographer, says, “The new beacon casts its rays over the waters where, in Black’s most powerful story, the yacht of Macleod of Dare went down, and all around it are scenes which have not only been described again and again in his glowing pages, but amidst which many of the happiest hours of his own life were spent. It would be difficult to imagine a more appropriate memorial to one whose pen was the first to bring to light the glories of the Hebrides, nor could a more fitting spot have been found on which to place it.” It may be told that some members of the Clan Black are living within view of the William Black Memorial Beacon.

While the tracing of this family tree, or forest of trees, is in some respects interesting, it is with a feeling of relief that we have got to the sixth of those precious sons of William and Mary, of Liltie-co-kee. A little more patience and an anecdote will carry us through.

On one occasion, a woman expressed considerable surprise regarding the swarthy visage of a certain young man. The person she was speaking to listened, and pondered, then said, with an air of importance, “If you promise not to tell, I will give you an explanation—the young man’s mother was a Black.” “What,” said the woman, “a darkie, preserve us a’!” The joke she was the victim of was made known to her when she broke her promise, and

spoke of "the black-a-vised youth whase mither was a darkie."

Alexander, married to Grace Russell, was owner and occupier of Blackfaulds. Even in those primitive days some were rich and some not so rich. Their sons were William, of Bents, and Alexander, of Woodmuir. Janet Cunningham was wife of the former, and Jane Russell was Alexander's wife. At Bents Farm there were three sons and five daughters. Alexander died young. William married Miss Gray, Whiteside, and, presumably, was farmer at Hartwood, West Calder.

John, third Bents son, who married Margaret Murray, Blackbraes, West Calder, was for many years in the G.P.O., Edinburgh, and on retiring had a cottage to live in built at Blackfaulds. One daughter (Mrs A. Martin) and her husband live near that place at present. John's eldest son became a Baillie in Lauder, and was succeeded as tailor and clothier there by a son. Another son is in Dalkeith, and another in San Francisco.

The Bents daughters were Christina, Mrs William Rankin. Her two sons became road surveyors. Of her four daughters, one still lives in Fauldhouse. Mary of Bents became Mrs John Bishop, Midseat, with sons and daughters. Grace was married to Mr Robert Frood, and has descendants surviving. Margaret was wife of Mr James Smith, Blackburn, who died in the summer of 1908, survived by a number of sons and daughters in Blackburn and elsewhere. The Blackfaulds daughters were Mary—Mrs James Turner; Grace—Mrs William Waddell Reeves; and Elizabeth, who became wife of her cousin, John of Crooklands.

Finally—and this item carries us back to the beginning—it should be stated that Mary, daughter of James of Liltie-co-kee, became wife of a Steel of Summerside, near

Morningside, and her descendants are still owners and occupiers of that farm.

While in the foregoing pages some parts may be scanty, it may be stated that, to prevent undue length, some minor details were withheld. A good deal of time and attention has been given to writing and re-writing, and careful use has been made of many particulars supplied a few years ago through the columns of *The Hamilton Advertiser*. Cordial thanks are offered to all who have in any way contributed towards the result now placed before readers of this history.

The Blacks and their near kindred of other names have been, as a rule, industrious and exemplary, and as they mostly have been fair of fame, so mostly fair of face, with eyes of azure blue.

SPEED YE WEEL.

To the Blacks o' Breich Water, and their many descendants.

SPEED ye weel, whaure'er ye bide,
Near haun or far awa',
A' ye wha by Breich Water side
The licht o' day first saw.

Speed ye weel, ye bairnies wee,
Some day ye'll proudly ken
That forbears here on muir an' lea
Strove weel to mak' a fen'.

Speed ye weel, baith young an' auld,
Whate'er may be your name,
Baith lassies fair an' laddies bauld
Whase folk had here their hame.

Speed ye weel, freends ane an' a',
An' think ye whiles wi' pride
On leal auld freends noo lang awa'
Frae dear Breich Water side.

Speed ye weel, an' heed ye weel,
A gude name to uphaud.
Aye "speak the truth an' shame the deil,"
Braw lass an' stalwart lad.

Speed ye weel, a' loyal Scots
Wha lo'e oor peasant race,
That aft in lanely rural cots
Hae shone wi' hamely grace.

Speed ye weel, ye Blacks and Whites,
Reids, Browns, an' Greens, an' Greys,
An' ilka ane wha blithe unites
To sing auld Scotland's praise.

SUNSHINE AND SHADOW.

Six of the clock, on a bracing March morning! As we emerge into the quiet street many unmelodious sounds meet our ears. These come from shipyards and public works, and are calling to labour for the day those who earn their living in these places.

The combination of weird sounds may or may not be necessary, but it is an example of confusion painfully confounded. The annoying and needless noises of a great city are certainly much in need of mitigation.

Leaving the toilers to their daily rounds, and the town to its turmoil and tumult, we walk to the nearest railway station, then cautiously our train passes from stage to stage with its living freight and a goodly accumulation of parcels, merchandise, and mail bags. At length Forrest-field, a somewhat lone station in the moors, is reached, and soon we are "driving our pair" on a steep ascent some twenty miles from the stir and friction of city life.

A good roadway, exhilarating air, and cheerful sunshine make an auspicious beginning to our day in the country. Here the calm of hill and hollow is pleasantly relieved by the welcome sounds of moorland birds, and, when a thought is given to town life, one feels grateful for the agreeable change. The lark, the peesweep, the plover, and other birds proclaim their presence.

The rocky heights stand out boldly in the bright light. By the wayside the earliest verdure is showing its fair and tender growth. Truly our joy is sweet, and gives anew the feeling that this morning view, of even a little bit of moorland, over which God's glorious sun is beaming, makes

life well worth living. The sowers have gone forth to sow, the harrows are jingling behind the willing horses, and altogether the picture is fair and peaceful, one to be cherished fondly in memory's inner shrine.

A modest farmstead is approached; the farmer, his wife, and daughter are each attending to some needful work. A little toddling, blue-eyed, golden-haired girl looks confidingly towards the stranger, and an encouraging word, with an outstretched hand, induces her to come near; then she leads the way indoors, prattling pleasantly even to one she never met before.

After a restful pause, and some homely converse, we again proceed. Further on, and higher, must our footsteps go, and ample reward awaits the advance. When the highest point is gained, just above Pappert-hills, there is an all round prospect that constrains us to pause and look around in silent admiration.

Varied and far-reaching is the view from this summit when atmospheric conditions are favourable. Some may say the place is wild and bare, and that the only good features are the roads leading away from it. Think twice all ye who are inclined to shun the moorland hills and glens—all is not barrenness there to the seeing eye, the hearing ear, the thoughtful mind.

To the right is a lofty, rocky ridge, while in front are Bentfoot and Dewshill farm steadings, and further to the west are lingering vestiges of two ancient abodes. Many acres of rough hill pasture are around, while a pit, a railway, and workmen's houses are also part of the scene. To the left hand, stretching eastward, and fed by a number of moorland streams, is Forrestfield Reservoir, from whence a goodly number of villages for miles around receive their supplies of water. Here and there cottages and farm houses stand out from the howes and knowes, and all the

while the blessed sunshine is streaming over hill and field, giving promise, in this season of hope, that soon again old mother earth will bud, blossom, and fructify, as in years and ages past.

What a beautiful blue sky bends over us ! We feel we are small, and anon we seem great, because of the gifts and privileges bestowed upon us, and so we march on with glad and grateful hearts. Going southward, on a cross-country road past Bentfoot and Dewshill, some hills loom over our head ; indeed, at places the huge boulders project so far that one would not be much surprised should a sudden descent at any time take place, and the rambler below have to run aside for safety.

The Cant Hills, nearly 1,000 feet above sea level, and not far from the famous Kirk o' Shotts, are southward, and it has been said that at a given place on the west coast of Scotland the first inland landmarks are the hills of Shotts and Shotts Kirk. There is something grim and weird in the general aspect of that elevated region, and sometimes one speculates on the origin of those hills and on the probability of ancient Scots having made caves there to live in, and mayhap fished and hunted on lochs and wilds around for a livelihood. Here and there are some secluded glens, while at several places are evidences of ancient agricultural operations. There is very little of woodland, but, in addition to a certain wild grandeur of hill and vale, loch and stream, there is a charming quietude, inspiring outlooks, and an ample supply of pure water and air. Two railways and two macadamized main roads, with many by-roads, skirt or intersect these hills. The village of Salsburgh is near to Shotts Kirk.

It might just be mentioned that any person, or company of persons, desirous of exploring, or enjoying a hermit-like holiday, might here find a desirable retreat.

So much for the sunny side of our day's outing. We cannot always avoid gloom and discomfort, yet it may be confessed that on this occasion these were entered upon deliberately. An arrangement had been made with a young city friend, of an enquiring turn of mind, to go deeper than the surface in quest of knowledge. We were for a little to pass from the bright world, and, with flickering lamps, stumble and splash along far under the greening fields of spring, in a realm of dense and dreary shadow.

A short distance from the little Howe burn, in the vicinity of Harthill, near the eastern extremity of Shotts Parish and Lanark county, we found our pit, also a kindly disposed engineman and manager, so the way was open. An experienced guide was told off to attend us, and we were swung to the pit bottom. Some men were at work doing repairs. The sound of an active Tangye pump broke the stillness. In a stable near by were a couple of hardy little horses for haulage purposes. There had been an "idle day" with the miners, consequently the branching roadways and working places were deserted.

On some main roads steam haulage is used, on others the horses referred to do duty, while on some stretches of rails able-bodied men negotiate the hutches on level or incline. Now and again the gleam of "black diamonds" was observed, and one could not fail to think on the excessive quantity of refuse that has to be dealt with in working even a very moderate seam of coal.

Early in our exploration our guide warned us to beware of wet footing, and really some parts of the way were several inches deep in clayey water.

While under our feet the track was rough and uncomfortable, the irregularities of the roof were considerable, and were at times severely *striking*.

Sometimes as we advanced we could look high over-

head, and but dimly observe the rocks that held up the forty odd fathoms between ourselves and *terra firma*, but soon, alas ! it was only by bending our heads nearly to our knees that we could get forward. One scalp at least was struck rather painfully by its sudden contact with the yellow sandstone of the roof. More than once by the way our guide remarked that it was a very hard kind of stone, and, on reflection, one of the party who tilted against that rock fully realised that it was harder than his head.

To the two strangers, who were under the care of the intelligent young "roadsman," what was seen and heard was certainly most interesting, perhaps somewhat instructive. At the "coal face" the various operations necessary for getting coal ready for transference to the "hill" or pit-head were made plain, but, while we listened, and looked at the confined caverns where miners must burrow, we felt not the least inclination to adopt their calling. Doubtless our sympathies for those at this dangerous occupation were quickened, and we can more fully appreciate the courage and endurance needful for the work.

Viewing the strata of coal and other substances which have to be cut through was an impressive sight, causing us to think again and yet again on the many marvels of the world we live in.

Thankfully, perhaps more so than ever, we welcomed the broad daylight, as the cage raised us from the darkness underneath, and enabled us to go where we would, with our heads quite erect, in the cheerful sunshine.

There was, fortunately, not far off, a friendly abode, to which we resorted for comfort. The stains of the pit—one might almost say the *pitiful* stains—of blood and grime were washed off as well as might be, for, alas ! while in the remembrance chamber of the brain not a few details were stored, on the outside a most undesirable mark was im-

pressed. On calm after reflection, it was resolved that henceforth the climbing of even the highest hill in that district would be preferable to the exploration of underground caverns with uneven roofs of hard sandstone.

Finally, while we cannot always escape life's shadows, there seems to be few overpowering reasons in support of going in search of them. However, we did not mourn, just tried to smile and endure philosophically, concluding that life after all is very much sunshine and shadow, while now and again most people must stand a hard knock.



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